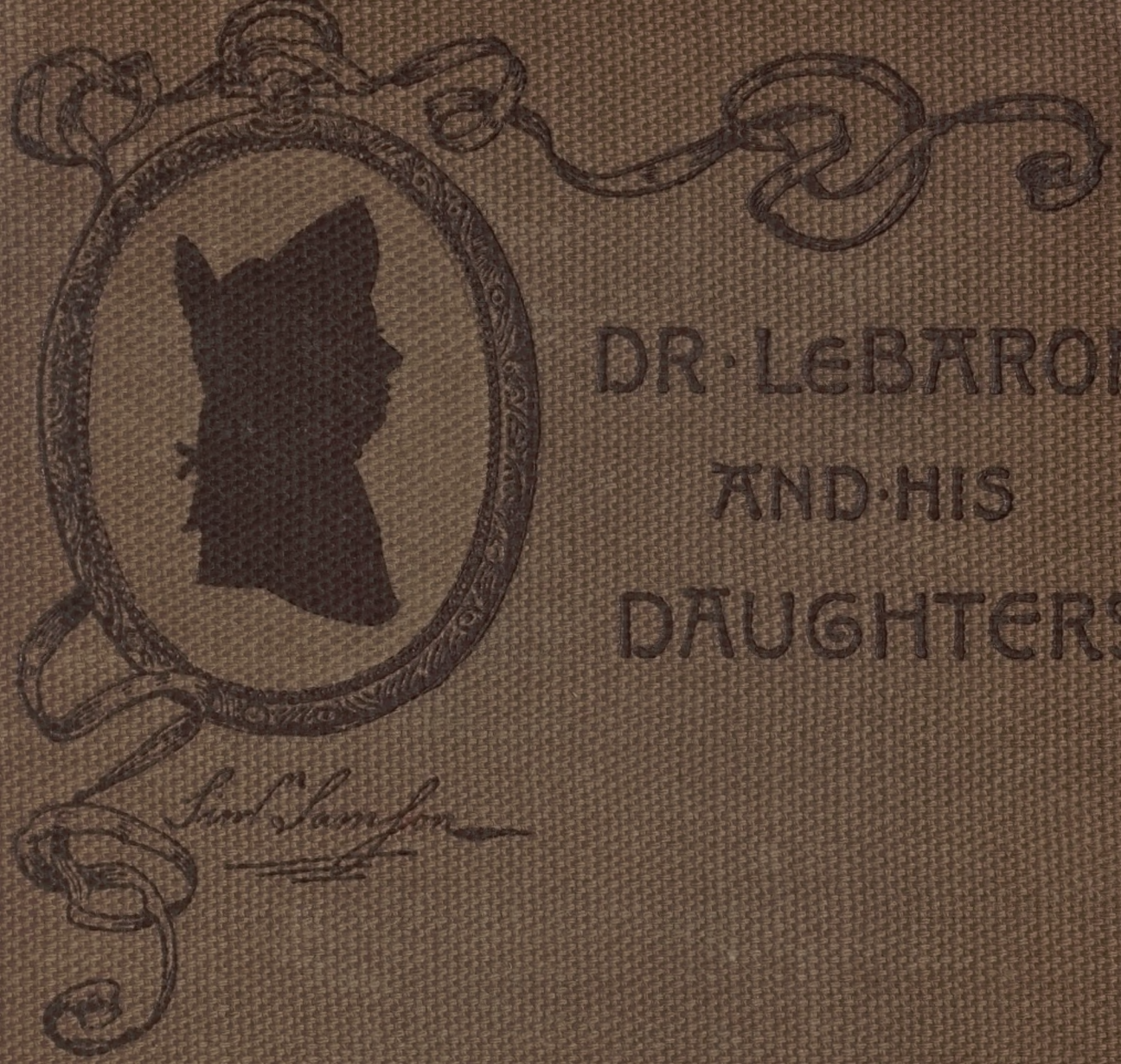




DR·LEBARON
AND·HIS
DAUGHTERS

Samuel Lamson

JANE G·AUSTIN



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DR. LEBARON AND HIS DAUGHTERS

A STORY OF THE OLD COLONY

BY

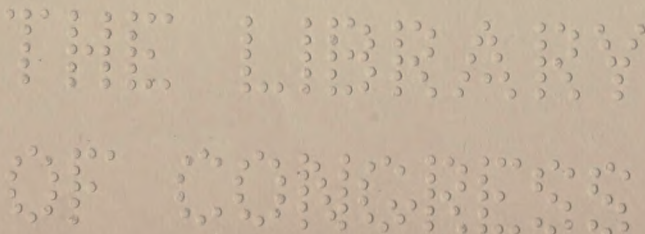
JANE G. AUSTIN

AUTHOR OF "A NAMELESS NOBLEMAN," "STANDISH OF STANDISH," "THE
DESMOND HUNDRED," "NANTUCKET SCRAPS," "MRS. BEAUCHAMP
BROWN," ETC., ETC.



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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TENTH THOUSAND.

The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.
Electrotyped and Printed by H. O. Houghton & Company.



To
All the Kith and Kin
OF THE NAME OR LINEAGE OF
LEBARON,
THIS STORY IS DEDICATED BY
THEIR LOVING COUSIN,
THE AUTHOR.

A WORD OF EXPLANATION.

It is with some hesitation that I offer to the public this story of Doctor LeBaron, including, as it does, so many other of the Old Colony chronicles ; and this, for the trite old reason that truth is stranger than fiction, and therefore more incredible. It is these incredible truths, however, that give its color to the folk-lore of any given epoch, and every student of our country's early history has discovered that our forefathers lived quite as intensely, if not as scientifically, as we do. They had, to be sure, no railway accidents, steamboat explosions, or "tramp-wire" catastrophes, but they supped full of horrors in the way of witchcraft, cursing, demoniacal possession, murder, lawless love, and broken hearts ; in fact, found in their own surroundings all that vital stimulus which we are apt to count as outgrowth of our advanced civilization.

The story of Mother Crewe's curse, with its results, is substantially true, and the scene depicted in chapter xlv. is literally so.

The tragedy embodied in chapter xxiv. is also matter of history, and its veracity must apologize for its horror.

In fact, there is no memorable incident related in these pages that is not matter either of history or well-founded tradition in the Old Colony, and though our modern taste may revolt at the crude coloring and realistic limning of these pictures of the past, we must piously preserve them as the shadows of those who, being dead, yet speak, and that in the language of their own day rather than ours.

I also think it right to say that Quasho's jokes, although many of them are threadbare now, were positively original with him, as authenticated by the family of his master.

In parting, let me thank those friends who have taken so gratifying an interest in the story of Standish of Standish, and promise them some farther details of his life in connection with that of his young friend, BETTY ALDEN.

JANE G. AUSTIN.

BOSTON, *November*, 1890.

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DR. LEBARON AND HIS DAUGHTERS.

CHAPTER I.

“DON'T BE IN A HURRY, WIDOW!”

THERE was a funeral in Elkanah Cushman's new house on Court Street, corner of Court Square as we now say, although in those days the old folk still spoke of the Great Gutter, while the modish young people called it Framing Green, because the Gutter had been leveled and smoothed into a grass plot convenient for laying together the frame of a house.

Elkanah himself called it Framing Green, when he told Lydia Bradford that he had bought of Parson Leonard the house on its northerly corner, and asked her to come and be its mistress.

Lydia was barely nineteen, and had always lived in Kingston, so that the idea of becoming suzeraine of a big house on the corner of Framing Green and Court Street, Plymouth, was rather attractive; and she had no dislike to Elkanah Cushman, though she privately thought him too old for love or marriage, his two-and-thirty years having done themselves full justice upon the stooping figure and lengthy face of the suitor.

David Bradford, with his large family and small income, was also quite alive to the advantage of marrying a daughter into the wealthy Cushman connection; and

the mother, as she kissed her child good-by upon the wedding day, said, with a smile and a tear, —

“ Well, daughter Cushman, I shall often be over to see you, for Plymouth is more home to me than Kingston, for all I’ve married out o’ town ! ”

So Elkanah brought home his bride to the goodly house he had prepared for her, and when in another year a baby Elkanah came to help fill its lonely chambers, Lydia felt that life had really something to offer worth the living for ; but then the silent, reserved husband sickened and died, and to-day he was buried.

The dreary memory of all these things mingled itself with Parson Leonard’s drearier prayer in the young widow’s ears, as she sat in the little room dedicated to the chief mourners, and wept some natural tears, but not enough to satisfy Mrs. Elkanah Cushman senior, who sternly watched her daughter-in-law, and would have been glad to attend her to some modified form of suttee.

The prayer, following the usual course, did justice to the good qualities of the deceased, and they were many, and carefully avoided all mention of, or all petition for, the state of the departed soul ; for, so fearful were the colonists of Roman error in the matter of masses for the dead or purgatorial interference, that it was only of late any religious services at all had been held at funerals ; and now, when the parson, softening his Calvinistic voice, alluded with as much tenderness as was in him to the young widow and fatherless child, Lydia raised her heavy eyes, and cast one look of affectionate regret toward the coffin visible through the open door, with the spare figure of the preacher at its head. Behind him, however, stood another man, and as the widow’s tearful eyes met his, a gleam of gratitude and childish appeal

shot through the tears, and softened the lines of the pretty baby mouth quivering so piteously.

Lazarus LeBaron caught the expression, read it truly, and cast his own eyes thoughtfully down upon the pinched features of the dead man lying so quietly in the midst.

He had done all that in him lay to save this man's life, and he was glad to remember it now. He had not liked him nor pretended to, but he had watched by his bedside night and day with unremitting care; nay, he had stolen from the hours of needful repose the time to con over and over not only the medical books his father had found sufficient for every need, but those imported by himself from London, Paris, and Germany.

He had expended upon this case all the care and all the skill at his command; and these were no ordinary gifts, for not only was Lazarus LeBaron a born physician, but he was son of that Francis LeBaron described as A Nameless Nobleman because of the mystery that shrouded his origin, but of whom it was soon discovered with absolute certainty that he was possessed of extraordinary medical and surgical skill, besides knowing how to hold his tongue more persistently than any other man on record, at least in the annals of the Old Colony.

The mantle of the father's skill had fallen squarely upon the shoulders of the son, and Doctor Lazarus LeBaron was a recognized power for life and death anywhere inside a hundred miles from Plymouth.

Moreover, since his widowerhood, now some twelve months old, many a woman, maid or widow, within that radius, had quietly noted the doctor's stalwart, deep-chested figure, fresh coloring, and noble if haughty head.

Many an one, too, had discussed the color and meaning of the steady eyes, whose power all had felt in one way or another, but in what different ways !

Elkanah Cushman had known them keen, thoughtful, and peremptory ; Lydia, in her sorrow and bereavement, had found them the kindest, gentlest, most encouraging eyes she had ever met ; her mother-in-law, Mrs. Cushman senior, felt them to be sarcastic, quizzical, mocking, or, as she briefly phrased it, hateful. His late wife had found them very patient, but generally very inscrutable eyes, and his children knew them to be affectionate, humorous, and occasionally stern.

And now Parson Leonard had finished his prayer with a grewsome warning to all present that, however strong or well or young they might be to-day, the time was short ere they must follow their deceased brother to the silent tomb, and after that to judgment.

Then he drew back to the doctor's side, and six men, carefully selected as contemporary with Elkanah Cushman, came forward, and raising the coffin laid it upon the hand-bier waiting at the door, for a hearse had never yet been seen in Plymouth. The procession, of men only, was formed, and, preceded by the bier with its relay of bearers, passed solemnly through the village, turned up through Town Square, and, painfully climbing Burying Hill, paused at the grave dug near that great ancestor of the dead man, the famous Elder, whose modern monument is so dwarfed by the ancient gravestone beside it.

Here they laid Elkanah, third of the name, to his rest ; and when all was done, Doctor LeBaron quietly detached himself from the crowd, and, passing on in a southerly direction, stood for a few moments beside a gray headstone, whose recent inscription told that here reposed

"Lydia, wife of Doctor Lazarus LeBaron," hardly a twelvemonth dead. Long he looked, and perhaps that expression of patience and sadness Lydia Bartlett so well had known was strongest among the many that passed across his face; but at the last he stooped to gather a weed from out the turf over that unquiet heart, and muttered, "Poor girl! Poor girl! It cannot fret thee now."

A few steps beyond lay his father's grave, and beside it a more recent one, telling that here slept Mary Wilder, who, having married Return Waite as a second husband, had on her death-bed pleaded to be laid in her last sleep beside her first love, her true husband.

Reading the brief lines that seem framed to avoid confession of this faithful infidelity, Lazarus shook his head.

"Poor mother!" whispered he, "thou hadst better been content with thy widowhood! Perhaps one happy marriage is all that is granted — howbeit" —

And with the air of one whose mind is resolved the doctor strode along the brow of the hill, turned down its northern slope, and, crossing the Great Gutter near its head, approached the house of the widow Cushman, as Lydia was already called, from the rear. Here in the horse-shed, then hospitably provided for the use of his guests by every householder, stood the doctor's horse munching his measure of oats, while the saddle and saddle-bags hung upon a hook above the rack, the merciful man being merciful to his beast then as now.

"Come, Pegasus! Leave the rest for another day, boy! We're wanted in Plympton before night."

And the doctor, who like his father was a little given to soliloquy, as indeed are most men not quite in sym-

pathy with their surroundings, led out Pegasus, still munching the last of the oats, and proceeded to bridle and saddle him upon the grass patch close behind the house. Before the operation was complete the back door opened, and a very black woman, her face preternaturally solemn, as befitted a house of mourning, came forward.

"Mist'ss says, Mas'r Doctor, you had n't ought to go funder widout 'freshments. Please fer ter walk in de dining-room where dey's laid out fer de mourners."

"Oh, thank you, Violet. Tell Mrs. Cushman that I cannot wait" —

But here a window was softly raised, and a blond head quaintly adorned with a widow's cap appeared. The doctor looked up and took off his hat, but the apology upon his lips was forestalled.

"Surely, Doctor, you won't refuse a glass of wine and a mouthful of meat before your long ride. You will not be so unfriendly, I hope."

The sweet voice had a tremble in it which made it irresistible, and Doctor Lazarus answered by throwing the bridle over a hook set for that purpose at the door of the shed.

The window was closed as softly as it had been raised, and when Violet showed the guest through the great homely kitchen into the dining-room, he found it deserted, although a door at the other side of the room closed as he entered. A small smile brightened the somewhat sombre eyes that observed the incident, but the doctor said nothing until he had hastily swallowed some of the food and wine profusely set forth by way of "funeral baked meats," and rose to depart. Then, hat in hand, he too passed through the door in question, and

found himself in the family sitting-room. Here, in a low chair beside the hearth, sat Lydia Cushman, some of her cumbrous mourning laid aside, and little Elkanah upon her knees. At sight of her guest, however, she put the child upon his feet, and rose, with a pretty flush in her cheeks.

"I hope you took something—I knew you would excuse me—mother Cushman says I can't be too particular now that I am left alone—but—I hope you won't be a stranger, Doctor"—

The fluttering voice died away in a little sob, and Doctor Lazarus took the soft white hand in his own.

"I sha'n't come unless I am needed, and mother Cushman need not be alarmed—but—*don't be in a hurry, widow!*"

And with this somewhat enigmatical advice Doctor Lazarus took his departure, nor crossed that threshold again for several months.

"She's sly enough for anything," said mother Cushman.

CHAPTER II.

SILVER-HEAD TOM.

PEGASUS trotted steadily on, occasionally indulging in a canter on some inviting bit of descent, and subsiding to a walk upon the steep ascents, until within the borders of Kingston his hoofs clattered over the bridge spanning Jones River, and a salt breath of the incoming tide fell refreshingly upon the doctor's cheek.

Drawing rein, he sat for a moment gazing upon the fair scene which a century and well nigh a half has hardly changed: the calm river sliding seaward between its grassy banks, the wide marshes bourgeoning into glory as the sun's level rays strike athwart their ripe wet grasses, the verdure of Clark's Island in the offing, the graceful Gurnet, the fair green slopes of Captain's Hill, where Standish lived and died, curving far out into the bay, and beneath all and over all the soothing blue of sea and sky, out of whose hollow ever flows that sweet salt breath, pungent and wooing as the kiss of an Amazon.

The doctor threw back his shoulders and inhaled it eagerly, then smiled in a dry, whimsical fashion all his own, and as he tightened the rein muttered behind his teeth a line of Virgil, to the effect that men, who call themselves the head of creation, are but impertinent ephemera, flitting for a brief moment through the external spaces of nature's stability.

From which one infers that love was not as yet lord of all in the doctor's life.

A mile or two beyond the bridge, as Pegasus trotted stolidly past a lonely farmhouse, his progress was arrested by a sturdy little fellow, perhaps six years old, who, rushing down the path from the door to the bars, shouted, —

“Ma'am wants Mister Doctor! She says stop a minute.”

“What's the matter, Sim? Does ma'am want some senna-and-salts for you?”

“No, sir. I ain't ailing,” replied Simeon, with a grin and a puppy-like twist of his fat little body. “May be it's Silver-head Tom. He was talking to ma'am about you — here's ma'am!”

And to be sure, a comely young matron now appeared upon the scene, an apron thrown over her head, and a baby in her arms.

“Oh, Doctor, I hope you'll excuse my stopping you, and I hope Simeon has said naught amiss” —

“Not he! Sim's one of my greatest friends, and by and by shall marry one of my daughters; for he'll make his way in the world, and that's more than ever I did, or shall.”

“More than his own father has done, and that's not joking, as you are, Doctor,” said Mary Samson in rather an offended tone; for nothing irritates really unfortunate people like the mock humility of those whom they believe more happy.

“Nay, then, goodwife, but what do you hear from Peleg? I know Captain John Winslow sent home letters the other day from the West Indies, and I dare say one was for you.”

"Yes, Doctor, I got a scrape of the pen ; but my poor man is no penman at the best, and he hardly said more than that he was sick and had been nigh unto death with yellow fever, caught in one of those dreadful nigger holes " —

"Niggers don't often have yellow fever. Jack likes white meat better," said the doctor absently ; and Mrs. Samson, with rather a toss of the head, turned toward the house. The doctor followed, but happily refrained from speaking aloud his thought, which was, "I wish Winslow would bring me home a case of Yellow Jack. I'd like to try conclusions with him !"

"Well, there, now," cried the soldier's wife, turning round on the doorstep, once a millstone, and smiling as good-humoredly as ever, "I've never told you yet why I hailed you. It's Silver-head Tom, and here he is. Come in, and sit down a minute with him."

Following the wave of her hand, the doctor entered the great cool kitchen of the farmhouse, and confronted a patriarchal old man who stood leaning upon a crutch-stick and anxiously watching the door. As the doctor approached he made a tremulous reverence, touched his white hair, and said : —

"I'm proud to see you, sir. I've always laid out to go to Plymouth some day, just to look at your father's son."

"My father ! Did you know him ?" cried Doctor Lazarus eagerly, and with an air of interest not many subjects could call to his face.

"Know him ! I guess I did, young man. Why, I was a fool, and he cured me !"

"And never left the prescription for curing fools behind him to make his son's fortune !" murmured the

doctor. "Come, now, sit down and tell me the whole story, grandsir. What name did Mrs. Samson give you, but now?"

"Perhaps she said Silver-head Tom, for that's what I'm mostly called," replied the old man, with an air of injured dignity. "But my name's Clark, — Thomas Clark."

"And why do they call you Silver-head, Mr. Clark? for your hair is no whiter than that of most men at your age."

"That's the peth of the whole matter, Doctor. That's why I wanted to get speech of you all these years."

And the old man chuckled so immoderately over his little jest that he coughed nearly as long, and Mary Samson came to bring him a cocoanut shell of water, to thump his back, and to say reprovingly, —

"Now, grandsir, now! You'd ought to know better than set yourself off that way, — an old man like you!"

"There, there, that'll do, woman!" gasped the old man at last. "I'm right enough now, and the doctor's heerd a man cough before to-day, hain't you, Doctor?"

"To be sure I have. Well, then?"

"Well, when I was a boy my folks lived over to Plymouth, Eel River way, you know. Do they call it Eel River now?"

"Yes, just the same. Well?"

"Well, 't was in the time of the Injun troubles along about — well, about" —

"About 1676, perhaps?"

"Yes, along about there. I never had no head for numbers, and it holds to reason the French doctor could n't give me what I never had before."

"That is Doctor Francis LeBaron, — my father?" asked Doctor Lazarus suggestively.

"The same, though he was n't round in these parts when I got the wovnd. Guess he was in France, or may be he was n't born" —

"Never mind which, grandsir, but get on with your story, for I 'm in haste."

"Well, I was just a-saying it was in the time of the Injun troubles, and uncle Clark's house was a kind of garrison, where the neighbors could run in, or leave the women and children, case o' danger.

"'T was of a Sunday it happened, and father and mother 'd gone to Plymouth to meeting, and left us young ones into the garrison, with a whole lot more, women and children and old folks. Then them red divvles, Totoson and Tispequin's band it was, they got their chance somehow, and first we knew — Lord! 'T seems as though I heerd 'em now — how they screeched and how they yelled — Lord!"

And the old man's voice quavered, while the piteous tears of old age rose in the rheumy caverns of the past, and coursed idly down the cheeks so ashen, so seamed, so sunken.

"Don't mind that part, grandsir," said Mary Samson gently. "Here, now, take a sup of cider, and mind you that it's all long gone by."

"Yes, long gone by, and I 'm a-going too. May be I 'll see little Lois the way she used to be, and not — well, well, it don't do for me to picter it out too partikeler, or I could n't tell what comes after. But just as I was running to catch Lois out o' that red divvle's hand, another feller's tommyhawk ketched me right atop of my head, and I did n't know no more. No, nor did n't know no more for most twenty year; I was a fool, same as any fool up to the poor-farm, or anywhere you like.

You see that there tommyhawk had split a piece offen my skull, and it had kind o' settled down onter the brain, and that made a fool out o' one o' the smartest boys ever you see."

"Yes, and then?" asked the doctor eagerly, as the old man paused to chuckle feebly and rub his hands.

"Well, the doctor came, — all the doctor there was, one Brown; but he wa'n't more 'n half-wit himself, and he never found out what was the real matter, only healed up the scalp-wownd and called it done, and there was I a fool! All this, mind you, is hearsay, for I don't know nothing about it, not the first thing after I see my little sister hanging over that Injun's arm, the blood running down her yaller curls" —

"And my father found you so!"

"No, he did n't find me, but my folks heerd of the great French doctor over to Plymouth, for they 'd moved to Kingston then, and father was dead; but mother she heerd tell of how he 'd cured Mis' Hunter, and many a one more, and she sot her mind on trying if he could n't help her poor fool, for I 'd been *such* a bright boy, you see, and 't was most a pity, now, wa'n't it?"

"The poor mother, — yes," replied the doctor softly, as he bent forward, his arm upon his knee, his eyes eagerly fixed upon the old man's face, while a tenderer smile than usual played around his thin lips.

"Well, she harnessed up the old horse, for she was pretty poor since father died, and she did n't have no hired man to help her, and she got me in the cart, a kind of a drag it was, and kep' me there with apples; for I was such a fool that if I see a bright blow on the road-side, or anything else I wanted, like as not I 'd pitch right out after it, — a real reg'lar fool, mind you" —

“I see, yes.”

“Well, we got to the doctor’s, so ma’am used to say, and she told him all about it, and got me to set down and let him feel of my head. Then he looked inter my eyes, and took my pulse, and so forth and so on, and fin’ly he told my mother that ef she ’d resk it, he ’d perform an operation that might cure me, and then ag’in might kill, but he rather thought it ’d turn out all right. Well, ma’am she was an awful spunky woman, and not used to backing out when once she ’d got under way for a p’int, so after thinking it over some, she said she ’d resk it, for a man might as well be dead as be a fool. The doctor he said she was some kind of a mother — ma’am never could call to mind just what kind, but ’t wa’n’t French, though you ’d suppose he ’d kind o’ favored his own native talk, but she was main sure it wa’n’t French; and then he said he could n’t do it right off, for he ’d got to hev some things from Boston to do it with, and he could n’t get ’em till some one was going, or he went himself, and then he asked her if she could afford to pay what it would cost.

“Well, that was kind o’ discouraging to mother, for like as not she had n’t over a fo’pence-ha’penny in her pocket that minute, and wa’n’t dead sure where she ’d get the next one. But she kep’ a stiff upper lip, and she says she did n’t know as ’t would be right convenient to pay the whole expense to once, but if the doctor could wait a little, or if he ’d take it out in truck, her apples was as good as anybody’s, ’specially the high-top sweetings; — yes, I see you ’re in a hurry, Doctor, so the long and the short on ’t is, your father he said he ’d leave it that last way, and he ’d come and get the apples, or whatever, along as he wanted ’em; and sure ’nough, while

mother lived, and that wa'n't but two-three years, the French doctor 'd come riding up same as you did to-day, and he 'd set and eat an apple and have a drink of cider, for he said that was apples too, and mabbe he 'd put half a dozen or so of high-tops into his saddle-bags and carry home for Mis' LeBaron to bake; and I do suppose he took up most two shillin' of his bill that way, and as fer the rest, — why, the Lord 's a good paymaster."

"And what did he do to you, my friend?" asked Doctor Lazarus, with infinite patience in his voice.

"Lord, yes, I was nigh forgetting that part, — kind o' lost my landfall. Well, after a while he sent word to mother to fetch me over and leave me for two-three days and his wife would take keer of me, for I 'd need be kep' very quiet after the operation; an' mother she done it, only she asked Mis' LeBaron to let her stop too, and do some work or 'nother to pay for her board, and she give her word she would n't interfere with what the doctor see fit to do, let it be what it might. She had good grit, ma'am had, and the doctor see it, and he let her stop right through; but I never could get her to tell me about it very clear, for the thought on 't always made her feel faint and squalmish; but as near as I can make out, the doctor strapped me down tight on a kind of frame he 'd fixed, and then he took and sawed a piece right outen my skull, and then he poked in and got the piece o' bone that had caved in and laid onter my brain all them years, and pulled it out and showed it to ma'am. Then he took a silver plate he 'd got all ready there, and just kivered the whole right over and pegged it down, and there 'tis to-day."

Arriving at which climax, Silver-head Tom pulled off the little black cap he always wore in the house, and dis-

played a silver plate glistening with ghastly effect upon the crown of his bald head.

Doctor Lazarus examined it with breathless interest and admiration.

"I am proud once more of my father. Forty years ago or more, and few men would do as well to-day! But here are letters engraved upon the silver."

"Ay, all one, my old woman used to say, as if 't was a coffin plate," replied Silver-head Tom rather resentfully. "'T is his name, and the year, and some gibberish of doctor's talk, they tell me, for I never see the top of my own head yet."

"Oh, ay, — 'F. LeB. fecit 1699,' — plain enough, and more like a monument, my friend, than like a coffin plate, for it tells not of the emptiness that lies beneath, but of something better, gone before. And now, Silver-head Tom, for the sake of that story, and for my father's sake, I am your friend and your physician for the rest of your life. Never shall you lack for tobacco when you're well, nor physic when you're sick, and when you die I promise you a silver coffin plate twice as big as that upon your head."

"There, now, grandsir, now you're wholefooted, ain't you!" exclaimed Mary Samson, well pleased, as the old man choked and gurgled his thanks. "You see, Doctor, he's a man that's been unfortunate, and all his folks are dead, and he's got no means left and no home, and so for old times' sake — for the Clarks and the Rings and the Samsons have always been neighbor-folk — Peleg and I we asked him to make his home with us, and kind o' chore round a little. I'm glad to do what I can for the old man, and I guess he's pretty contented, ain't you, grandsir?"

“Yes, — oh, yes, I s’pose I be, Mis’ Samson. I’d like well enough to have a glass o’ grog sarved out a leetle oftener” —

But Doctor Lazarus, rising to take his leave, caught a warning glance shot over the speaker’s head, and he answered promptly : —

“Oh, no, Clark, not grog for a man with a silver plate in his head. Why, man, it’s sure death for you, soon or late. Cider, now, cider’s the drink for you, and I know Mistress Samson has a capital brew of cider on tap, but even that you must take in moderation, Tom. A man with a silver plate in his head has got to be careful. And now good-day to you both, for really I must be in Plympton. Sim, my boy, here’s a penny for you, and mind you grow up straight and handsome for one of my girls!”

CHAPTER III.

BATHSHEBA CREWE'S LOVER.

"Now, then, Pegasus, we must make up for lost time," remarked the doctor, gathering up the reins and touching the good horse with his heel, a liberty Pegasus resented by boring forward at the rate of twelve miles an hour, and carrying his master out of Kingston and into Plympton almost before he was saddle-fast. The twilight had already fallen, and as the doctor turned a sharp corner into the narrow and wooded lane leading to the Widow Crewe's lonely farmhouse, both he and Pegasus were startled by the sudden whinny of another horse, who, quietly feeding along the roadside, narrowly escaped collision with the doctor's steed.

"Who 's there?" sharply demanded the doctor, peering into the shade of a clump of birches, where some figures appeared to be stealthily moving out of sight.

"Oh, it's you, Doctor!" replied a man's voice rather sheepishly, as a young fellow made his way through the bushes into the road, while his companion continued her retreat.

"Yes, Ansel Ring, it is I, coming to see your wife that is to be. How does she fare to-day?" And the doctor, drawing his shaggy brows together, watched with some disfavor the motions of the young man as he caught and mounted his horse, reining him in behind that of the doctor.

"I say, how does Bathsheba feel to-day?" reiterated he peremptorily.

"Oh — I — I've not seen her yet, Doctor. I was just going there — I just came over from Plymouth."

"And did n't Molly Peach give you news of her friend just now? I thought she was here to nurse Bathsheba."

"Yes, certainly — oh, I suppose so — yes, but I only just met her. She said she was tired, and stepped down the lane for a mouthful of fresh air, and so I happened to come along" —

"Hm!" replied the doctor, and the two rode on in silence until the road ended in front of a little unpainted cabin, never very substantial, and now falling into ruin, which a prevailing air of untidiness and unthrift degenerated into squalor.

The doctor, dismounting, threw the bridle over a familiar hook, and strode into the house, paying no further attention to the young man, who somewhat disconsolately rode his own horse round to a wretched shed, where he stabled him beside the widow's meagre cow and in unsavory proximity to the pig and fowls, comprising the live-stock of the farm. Pegasus would probably have kicked the shed down before he would have accepted its shelter.

But Ansel Ring's horse was of meeker mould, and his master, having provided him with such food and bedding as were to be had, let himself quietly in at the back door of the house, and passing through a scullery ensconced himself in the end of the great fireplace, where besides a fire of three-foot logs was ample room for a bench, whose occupant could look straight up the wide, short chimney, and make observations upon the weather or the stars.

A door opposite this fireplace stood open, and Ansel

moved farther into the chimney, so as not to see the corner of the great bedstead with its curtains of dingy homespun, and the figure of Molly Peach stooping over the pillow.

A pretty creature this Molly Peach, with a white and pink skin and yellow hair, and those greenish-gray eyes that often go with a pure blond complexion and which wise men do not trust.

At the other side of the bed stood Doctor LeBaron, and between them lay the worn face and gaunt figure of Bathsheba Crewe, the betrothed of Ansel Ring, the friend of Molly Peach, and the only child of the dark, uncanny middle-aged woman who stood at the foot of the bed, her snake-like black eyes roving rapidly from face to face of the three silent figures before her.

The doctor laid down the attenuated hand, and replaced his watch in his pocket.

"She took the draught I left, and the cordial, and the powders?" asked he, looking at Molly.

"Yes, sir, she took them all," replied the girl, not raising her eyes.

"She took them all, for I never let them out of my sight till I saw them down her throat," muttered the mother, with a suspicious glance at Molly.

"And who watches to-night?" asked the doctor briefly.

"Her man said he would," croaked the widow. "He came along with you, did n't he, Doctor?"

"Yes. He's out in the kitchen. But you'd better sit up too, widow. She's a very sick girl, Bathsheba is, and there'd better be two watchers. Molly Peach might go upstairs to bed."

"All right, Doctor," replied the woman eagerly

"that's the way it'll be, and you'll tell me about the medicine. I can give it to her full as well as any flibbertigibbet that comes along, I guess."

"I'll tell you and Ansel both; I'm going out to my saddlebags for what is wanted, and I'll speak to him."

"Give me something to make me sleep, Doctor! I'm so tired, — so tired!" moaned the sick girl, opening her great dark eyes for the first time.

"No, she does n't sleep at all," said Molly officiously. "And she's so restless by times, and then all gone, like this."

"Well, child, you shall have something to make you sleep, and Ansel will sit beside you and see that you are not disturbed. Ah, that pleases you, does n't it?" And the doctor hailed with kindly approval the faint gleam of satisfaction flitting across the sick girl's ghastly face.

Passing out through the kitchen, he beckoned Ansel to follow him, and as the two stood beside Pegasus the doctor, rummaging his saddlebags, turned a keen eye upon the young man and said: —

"Hark you, now, Ring! That is a very sick girl, and a feather's weight more may be the feather's weight too much."

He waited a moment, but receiving no reply went on a shade more sternly: —

"You are to watch with her to-night, for the old woman amounts to nothing, and Molly is to stay upstairs, mind you. If you are going to play this girl false, I don't suppose you want to kill her into the bargain."

"I don't know as you've any call to say I'm going to play anybody false," began the young fellow sul-

lenly ; but the doctor put him aside with an impatient "Pshaw !" and returning to the kitchen began to measure out and compound his drugs in the generous doses of that day.

"Now look you here, mother Crewe, and you too, Ansel Ring, — no, not you, Molly, for you 've nothing to do with the night work this time, — this powder is to make her sleep quietly ; but it need not be given until bedtime, — nine o'clock or so, if you've any time piece " —

"I've got a watch, Doctor," interrupted young Ring in eager boastfulness, dragging up from his fob an enormous silver turnip and holding it affectionately to his ear. "She's going! She's all right!" added he in a tone of relief, as he turned the dial toward Doctor LeBaron's quizzical gaze.

"Well, if she keeps on going until nine o'clock, you 'll give Bathsheba this powder in jam, or applesauce, or best of all in the pulp of a roast apple ; but before that, just now if she will, she is to drink as much as can be got down of the herb tea I ordered before, and you are to keep the dock leaves to her feet, and have her covered close and warm ; in the morning, early, give her this draught ; draw the curtain across the foot of the bed, but not at the sides, for I hold that there is but little danger in a moderate circulation of air around a feverish patient — indeed — hm " — and the doctor finished his wise heresy to himself with an inarticulate murmur.

Mother Crewe, whose toothless jaws worked incessantly, as if she chewed thoughts too venomous for speech, made no reply to these instructions, which indeed she hardly heard, for her rheumy eyes were fixed upon the fair face of Molly Peach, thrust forward out

of the shadow of the bedroom, whither at the doctor's rebuff she had retreated. Ansel Ring, standing close beside the table, seemed both listening and watching intently, as the doctor laid down the medicines he had prepared and with his last words took up his hat and gloves and moved toward the door.

"I am going on to Goodman Ryder's," said he, pausing on the threshold, "and if I find him no better than I fear, may like enough stay there all night. In that case I will look in again in the morning as I ride past. Good-e'en to ye."

But Ansel Ring followed the doctor, and, officiously helping him to the saddle, blurted out : —

"I'm none so bad as you're thinking, Doctor. I'm not one to hurt a poor sick wench like that, — I'm not bad" —

"Not so much bad as weak, my boy," replied the doctor, kindly enough, if a little contemptuously. "And that's a good deal more dangerous, both for yourself and others. But I've hopes you'll prove man enough to hold the straight course until Bathsheba is out of danger, at least."

"You're very hard on me, Doctor" — began Ansel ; but already Pegasus' feet were clattering on the stones of the lane outside, and in another moment his rider was hidden in the leafy gloom.

Turning into the house, the young man found Molly stirring the fire to a blaze, hanging on the kettle, and making various preparations for supper ; not tea, for that necessity of ours was almost an unknown luxury of our great-grandfathers, and was ill represented by various decoctions of herbs, by cider posset, by molasses and water, or by milk in various forms.

The old woman was gathering up the medicines in her claw-like fingers, and mumbling maliciously over them, with side glances at Molly, who now brought forward some wooden plates and iron spoons, and waited beside the table till she could lay them upon it.

“Yes, I’ll take care of ’em,” muttered the crone; “I’ll see that my poor gal gets ’em. I’ll leave ’em to none of your fibbertigibbets and light o’ loves to mix and meddle with, and” —

She hobbled off as she spoke, and Molly, swiftly passing to Ansel’s side, whispered, “See where she puts them!” and was back at the table before mother Crewe, jealously turning round on the threshold, could see or hear her. Without reply Ansel followed into the bedroom, and apparently bending over Bathsheba, who again lay with closed eyes, pale and still, he saw how her mother hid the medicines under a candlestick upon the high mantelpiece; then softly passing out again, he seized a bucket, and had left the house before mother Crewe returned, and sat down at the table chuckling to herself in a ghastly fashion. Ansel presently came in with a bucket of water, and Molly placed a bowl of Indian mush, a pitcher of milk, and another of molasses upon the table, to which she added a platter of bannocks of rye meal mixed with sour milk, and baked upon a board before the fire; this was an unusually elaborate repast, and Molly had made the bannocks as a treat for Ansel, who was fond of them. The brief and gloomy meal over, Molly proceeded to clear it away, while the old woman wandered in and out of the sick room, guarding her child from some vague danger, with the pathetic restlessness of suspicious and helpless age. Ansel sat wretchedly beside the fire, wishing this, wish-

ing that, wishing most of all, perhaps, that he was on board the "Enterprise," far away from his native shores. To him presently came Molly, whispering, as she thrust a little package into his hand, "When she comes out, go and put this under the candlestick, and fetch me the one that's there now."

"What! What's in this?" demanded the young man, a cold dew springing upon his forehead, and his lips turning white.

"Rye meal, you silly fellow! Do you think I'd hurt Bathsheba?" demanded the girl, leaning toward him, until her sweet breath intoxicated him, and he grasped at her hand, murmuring, —

"Oh, Molly!"

"Hush! She'll be back in a minute. Do as I tell you, and we'll have hours to ourselves — hush!"

And as the old woman reappeared, the girl was placing the trenchers upon the dresser at the other side of the room.

"How is Bathsheba now?" inquired Ansel, rising hastily from his bench in the chimney corner, a feverish light in his eyes, but a strange pallor upon his cheek.

"Sything and moaning, poor wench," replied the mother tremulously. "Go and speak a comfortable word to her, Ansel, boy. And get you to bed, Molly Peach; there's naught for you to do in there to-night, nor here neither."

"I'm going, mother, but I'd fain toast my feet a bit first," replied the girl mildly, as she took possession of the chimney corner seat, and, removing her ill-shapen shoes, thrust her feet out toward the smouldering logs.

Even mother Crewe could say nothing against so usual a proceeding, and with one malevolent glance at the

golden head glittering against the sooty background of the chimney, she returned to the bedroom, meeting Ansel in the door.

"She's sleeping, I think," said he softly.

"Go down, Ansel, and draw a jug of cider to keep awake on, for we two are to watch, lad, you and me. And if you fancy an apple or two, they're there in a kilderkin, all I've got, all the poor old tree bore, — poor old tree, — poor old woman, — but I'll watch, I'll watch my gal" —

Muttering and mowing, she wandered back to the bedside, and Ansel hurriedly tossed the powder into Molly's lap.

"You're sure there's no danger for Bathsheba? What are you going to do?" whispered he hoarsely.

"Get the cider quick, quick!" returned the girl; and as the bewildered youth, seizing a stone pitcher and the candle, disappeared down the ladder into the rough cave serving as a cellar, Molly, in her stocking feet, stole swiftly to the dresser and brought back a small iron vessel which she called a skillet, and, hastily wiping it out, shook the stolen powder into it. In a moment the light of the candle showed that Ansel was returning, and the girl quietly went to meet him, holding the skillet toward the light.

"Put some cider in there, and warm it, with a little molasses and a scrape of nutmeg," said she softly. "Mix the powder in well, and give it to the old woman. She'll sleep, and I'll come down and sit with you."

"Oh — that's what — but Molly — Bathsheba" —

"She'll sleep well enough without it," replied Molly coldly. "But if you don't care, I don't, — do as you like."

And with a toss of her golden head she snatched the candle and disappeared up the stairs to the loft, leaving the skillet on the dresser.

"Has n't that hussy gone yet? What was she saying? Why do you look so, boy?" demanded the old woman tottering across the room and peering into that white and guilty face.

"I — I don't know. She snatched my candle and was off so sudden I thought there was something wrong" —

"Well, she's gone, and you and me's to watch, Ansel, — you and me. Have a drink of cider, and give me some, boy, for I'm all of a chill, somehow."

"I'll warm you some, if you say so, mother; just as you, say though, — just exactly" — And the poor tool turned to the dresser, and laying a hand upon the skillet paused for the oracle he had invoked.

"Yes, yes, warm me a drop," said the old woman eagerly; "it'll be comforting. Warm me a drop."

CHAPTER IV.

JUDAS.

It was two o'clock in the morning, that dreary time, that dying time, when earth has lost the vitalizing influence of yesterday's sun, and has not yet caught the first promise of the coming day; the time when to the insomniac comes the true torture of wakefulness, and when the weary watcher finds sleep most imminent because strength most wasted; the hour when sorrow is sorest and trouble most carking; the hour when many a life loses hold of the things that are seen, and drifts out into the shadowy ocean of the unseen.

Waking from the uneasy doze that ill supplied the place of sleep, Bathsheba Crewe turned painfully upon her pillow, moaning, "Water! — water!"

No one replied, although the soft sounds of whispering voices disturbed the stillness, and as the sick girl tried to move she was aware of a weight across her feet and the sound of heavy breathing close at hand.

Painfully raising her head, she made out by the dim light the figure of her mother thrown across the foot of her bed, asleep and breathing stertorously; but unable to arouse her, and exhausted with the effort, Bathsheba fell back again, repeating, "Water! Oh, give me water!"

And still the sleeper never stirred, and still between the heavy sounds of her breathing came that faint murmur of whispering voices beyond.

For a while the girl lay listening vaguely in the drowsy indifference of fever, but suddenly a tone louder than the rest, her own name spoken in her lover's voice, drew her to a startled consciousness of her surroundings, and dragging herself to the edge of the bed she peered out through the open door into the kitchen beyond. The sight that met her eyes was as the sting of the lash to an exhausted horse, and thrusting her head still further out of the bed, to which she clung with a strength no one could have believed latent in those attenuated hands, she looked and listened eagerly.

Side by side upon the chimney bench sat the false lover and false friend, their arms entwined, her head upon his shoulder, the bright hair fallen from its coil and trailing down serpent-wise across his breast, his head bent upon hers. A little tongue of blue flame shooting up from the buried log at their feet shed fitful light upon the picture, and as it rose and fell, the golden serpent trailing across both evil hearts seemed to writhe in joy.

Preternaturally sharpened, the sick girl's ears caught enough of that whispered talk to guess the rest: they loved each other; they rebelled against the fate that bound him to one he pitied, but loved no more; they longed,—it was the girl who said it, but the man's silence consented, they longed that she should die and leave them free, or, as Ansel feebly amended, that she should recover, and see that it was not best to hold him to his word. But at this temporizing Molly flared out:—

“Don't try to cheat yourself, Ansel! She'll never give you up till she gives up life. You'll never be happy till she's dead.”

The man made no reply, but stirred uneasily, and that glittering snake athwart his breast gleamed joyously.

How long the tragedy went on no one now can tell, but it was cut short by a terrible interruption; for of a sudden a tall white apparition, black hair flowing around a ghastly face, and great dark eyes flaming feverishly from deep caverns of woe, stood before them, one long pale hand extended, while from the lips, blue and lifeless as if already dead, burst the one word —

“Judas!”

Then swaying back and forward, like a tree smitten through the heart, the murdered girl fell crashing to the floor, and from the bedroom staggered the old mother, not yet fully awake, and threw herself upon the body of her child with suffocating cries of mingled grief and wrath. Shrieking wildly, Molly Peach started from her lover's side and fled out into the night, while he, his manhood roused at that piteous sight of dying daughter and stricken mother, ran to raise them and do what yet remained possible of his forgotten duty to both.

A few hours later, Dr. Lazarus LeBaron, riding quietly along the road from Goodman Ryder's, and thinking of the placid sleep in which he had left that aged Christian in the hope of a joyful waking in the Great Day, was startled at sight of a woful and disheveled figure, with a scared face set in unkempt yellow hair, rising from beneath a clump of bushes at the wayside.

“Molly Peach!” exclaimed he sternly. “What brings you here, girl?”

“Oh, Doctor LeBaron, I'm so sorry — it was n't my fault — and I'm so sick and frightened, and I don't dare go back to that old witch, and will you take me home to Plymouth behind you? I don't care for a pil-lion nor anything, only help me get away from here.”

She was crying and wringing her hands, and very honestly in trouble ; but Doctor LeBaron looked coldly upon her for a moment, and then said : —

“I’m going to mother Crewe’s. You can, if it suits you, follow me there, and I will then answer your petition according to what I hear.”

As he spoke he touched Pegasus with his heel and rode on. The girl, drying her eyes, looked venomously after him for a moment, then, arranging her dress a little, walked on with an air of determination, and before noon reached Plymouth, footsore and weary, but obstinate.

Arriving at the Crewe cabin, the doctor softly raised the latch and went into the forlorn kitchen, where the fireless hearth, the candle burned down in its socket, the cheerless table and shuttered windows, made a picture of squalid desolation, fair sequel of the night’s adventure. From the bedroom came the sounds of fierce sobs, mingled with muttered imprecations and passionate appeals to one who made no reply.

Throwing open the windows and door, to admit the morning light, the doctor passed into the bedroom, and stood aghast, for half upon the floor and half upon the bed lay the unconscious form of the sick girl, while beside it, closely clasping the rigid limbs, knelt her mother, with gray hair falling in elf-locks around her shoulders, and grimy face seamed and furrowed with tears torn from the very life-springs in a torrent of passionate emotion.

“What is this ? What has happened, mother ! Here, let me lay this poor girl decently upon her bed. What has happened since I was here, and where are the others ?”

Suiting the action to the word, the doctor easily raised the skeleton form of the poor old crone, and seating her in an armchair, where she passively remained, wringing her hands and moaning, he laid Bathsheba upon the bed, put his hand over her heart, looked at her eyes, and felt of her extremities.

"She's not dead, but could scarce be nearer," pronounced he. "I want hot water, mustard, aqua vitæ — but where is — nay, where is Ansel, where is anybody?"

And throwing all the coverings he could find, over the lifeless body of Bathsheba, the doctor hastened out to his saddlebags to bring some spirits and other restoratives, without which he never traveled.

Returning, he cast an eye upon the empty fireplace, and to his great astonishment perceived the figure of a man seated upon the hearth, his head laid upon the arm he had folded on the chimney bench, and actually fast asleep. It was Ansel Ring, who, driven from the bedroom by the fierce invective of that wolf-like mother mourning over the body of her injured nursling, had thrown himself upon the hearth, and consistently with his weak, passionate nature, had sobbed himself to sleep.

Rousing him with a thrust of his foot, the doctor peremptorily bade him get the fire to burning, and heat some water as soon as might be, adding that what chance of life was left to Bathsheba Crewe hung mostly upon the speed with which remedies could be made ready.

"She's not dead, then!" quavered the wretched fellow, avoiding the doctor's gaze.

"Not quite. Don't stop for questioning, but do as I tell you." And the doctor returned to the bedroom to

pour his cordials down the lifeless throat, to chafe the temples, the hands and wrists, and to listen anxiously for some response from the poor broken heart, while the old mother, at his direction, feebly rubbed the icy feet, and in a rasping voice, broken by sobs and curses, told the story of the night, so far as she knew or surmised it.

"The water is hot now, Doctor," announced Ansel timidly, and the croaking voice rose in wild malediction.

"Get out of my house and out of my hearing, you hound!" screamed the old woman; but as the white face of the youth disappeared, the doctor sternly said:

"Look you here, mother Crewe! This girl's life hangs on the balance. Let Ansel Ring, or for that matter Molly Peach, do all that they can to help me, or I cannot bring her back. Wait for your anger till your child cannot be harmed by it."

"I'll wait. Never another word will I speak to either Judas till you say it's safe," promised the old woman promptly; and the doctor, knowing she was to be trusted, took courage, and calling Ansel gave directions for a bath and other matters to be made ready.

"If Molly Peach is outside, bid her come in and help you," added he coldly; but as we know, Ansel sought in vain for the late companion of his treachery, and moved by remorse, shame, and the compelling influence of two severe gray eyes, proved himself so efficient and willing, that with what help the old woman could give, matters were soon in train, and in an hour or two from the doctor's arrival Bathsheba lay much as she had lain the day before, very weak and low, but alive and quite conscious.

Leaving her thus, with many charges to his two un-trusty assistants, the doctor mounted, and, urging Pegasus to unwonted speed presently found himself again at the Samson homestead, where Mary, warned by Simeon's eager outcry, met him upon the step.

"Good-morrow, dame. No, I am in too much haste to enter. I want you to do a deed of neighborly charity, and go to mother Crewe's as soon as may be."

"Oh, Doctor, I'm loath to say you nay" —

"You *can't* say me nay, woman! 'T is life or death for Bathsheba Crewe," interrupted the doctor positively; and then in curt phrases he related so much as was necessary of the past night's work, and set forth the present emergency.

"I think the girl will die," said he in conclusion. "But what chance is left to her lies between now and this time to-morrow, and that chance I put into your hands, Mary Ring, and remember that Ansel is your own brother's son."

"Good land, Doctor, you need n't take my head off to get me to go and save a girl's life!" cried Mistress Samson, rather angrily, as she began to untie her checked apron, and glanced hastily at her short homespun skirts and tidy foot-gear.

"The only reason," added she, her indignant mood lapsing into perplexity, "I kind of doubted about it is, that mother Samson and Priscilla Fuller — she that's my man's twin, you know, and he's dreadful fond of her, Peleg is — they've come to spend the day, and" —

"All the better," broke in the doctor. "They will look after the house, and widow Fuller will have a special care of baby Priscilla, her namesake. But if Peleg's mother is here I will step in and speak to her,

for her grandsire's sake. Captain Myles Standish is an ancestor to be proud of, let me tell you, dame."

"So Peleg is always saying and telling his boys," replied the hostess, well pleased, as she ushered her guest into the house. "There's nothing suits him better than to sit of an evening alongside his mother, and get her to tell over the old-time stories she got from her father."

"Her father would remember his father, old Myles, very clearly, I suppose?"

"Why, yes, he was a man grown when the old captain died. Here's mother."

"Good-morrow to you, Mistress Samson! I came in on purpose to salute you, madam."

And the doctor, with a certain foreign grace of manner inherited from his father, stooped and kissed the cheek of a beautiful old woman, with soft white hair and wonderful blue eyes, who came forward, dropping her formal little "curtsey," and smiling graciously; — a tiny little old lady, for the Standishes are small of stature, but mighty of spirit; and this granddaughter of the great captain had ruled her house and her family and herself, both wisely and strongly, all her life long until to-day, when, with her seventieth birthday behind her, she stood straight and active among her children and grandchildren, and planned their duties for them.

"We heard what you were saying to Mary, Doctor," began she, when the first greetings were over, "and it seems to me better that my daughter Fuller here, who is a wonderful good nurse, and has neither chick nor child to hinder her, should go and take care of the sick girl as long as she needs care, while Peleg's wife could only stay a short season at any rate, having her own

duties to look after. So Priscilla shall go as soon as Tom Silver-head can put the saddle on our old white mare again."

"Yes, yes, that is by far the best way to manage it, madam. I know what a famous nurse widow Fuller is, and, as you say, she has no other ties if you can spare her."

"I can spare her as well as she can spare me, Doctor LeBaron," replied the old lady a little stiffly. "My children have never had to stay or to go on my account yet. As for poor Lyddy, you know for yourself, sir, how she would have fared, if it had not been for her mother."

"Yes, indeed, madam; and how is Lydia now?"

"Lively as a cricket, Doctor. She's gone to spend the day with cousin Peddy's girls; they've got an apple-bee at their house, and Lyddy must be there to help."

"Ah, these girls!" exclaimed the doctor, smiling in the depths of his heart, remembering that Lydia had passed her fortieth birthday; and then, as stirring Priscilla Fuller came clattering down the stairs in her hood and riding-jacket, and Silver-head Tom brought the old white horse to the door, the doctor mounted Pegasus and rode swiftly home.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOCTOR'S DEN.

DEEP in reverie, Dr. LeBaron rode steadily on, hardly noting the familiar objects upon the roadside, until Pegasus halted so suddenly and decidedly upon the brink of a bright little stream bordering the way as nearly to throw his rider over his head.

“What — whoa — oh, ’t is Cold Spring, and you ’ll not pass it, Master Pegasus, save under stress of whip and spur! Well, then ” — and the doctor, leaping lightly to the ground, suffered the horse to thrust his muzzle into the sun-warmed waters where he had paused, and then, leading him some twenty feet further to the spot where the spring bubbled out cold and clear from beneath a great rock, he picked up the clam-shell carefully laid in a clean spot, and emptied it again and again.

“Ah!” exclaimed the doctor, with a long expiration of joyous breath, as he replaced the clam-shell and swung himself into the saddle, “’t is a good draught, Pegasus, none better, — that is, when none better may be had!”

And smiling at his own conceit, LeBaron rode merrily on, until just before entering the town he came upon a saucy-looking young negro perched on a rail fence and munching an apple.

At sound of a horse's feet he rolled his great eyes

lazily around, but, recognizing the rider, made haste to jump from his roost into the field, just in time to avoid a whistling cut from the doctor's riding wand.

"Quash! You lazy black-skin! Did n't I tell you yesterday if I caught you idling again I'd give you a whipping?"

"Lord, yes, mas'r Doctor, and I had n' no fawts o' idling — o' course I had n'."

"What do you mean by that, you imp of darkness, when I caught you at it?"

"Did n' cotch me, mas'r. Look yere, mas'r, did n' you tell me eberybody got to wuk, quality same as niggers?"

"Yes — well?"

"Well, mas'r, did n' I ask you dat time wat wuk mas'r Doctor did, an' mas'r Parson Leonard, an' " —

"Well, well, I told you we did head-work, and you did hand-work; but what's all that to do with it?"

"W'y, mas'r Doctor, I faut dat I'd jes like ter try changin' wuks, jes' a leetly bit, an' I was doin' head-wuk a-settin' top o' dat ar fence w'en mas'r come along and kind of misunderstood wat I was about."

"Got clear of your whipping this time, Quash, you sinner," replied the doctor, with an expectant smile. "What was the head-work, boy?"

"W'y, mas'r, I was jes' a clim'in' ober de fence, goin' fer pull termits, same as mas'r tole me, and fus' ting I see was four five leetly sparrers a-pickin' up grub-worms out'n de hills. So jes' den I kinder lighted onter a apple dat was a-layin' round, an' I sez to myself: —

"'Hi, den, Quash, s'pose you frow de core o' dat apple right 'mongst dat leetly crowd o' birds, one, two, t'ree, fo', five of 'em, an' s'posin you hit two o' dem, how

many 'd be lef'?' Now how many does you make it, mas'r Doctor?"

"Two out of five leaves three, according to my arithmetic, Quash," replied the doctor carelessly; "what does your wisdom say?"

"Well, mas'r, I s'pose you's right; any ways, 'tain't likely a pore nigger do head-wuk same as a ge'man; but de way I was reck'nin' was dat dey 'd all fly away, an' dere would n't be so much as one leetly fedder lef'. But you see, mas'r, I had n' got de apple eat off de core, so I had n' had a chance to fling it 'fore mas'r come along."

"Quash! Cut me a good stick from that birch tree, and come here."

"Lordy, mas'r, you ain't a-goin' ter lick pore nigger boy fer not knowin' no better, be you, mas'r?"

"If I don't, it's only because I'm in too great a hurry, you rascal; but look out for the next time, sir" —

"Oh, mas'r, I clean forgot fer tell you dat ar arrant from Miss Lyddy" —

"An errand from Miss Lydia! Now see here, Quash, you'll get that whipping yet, if you're so careless. What is your errand, sirrah?"

"W'y, Miss Lyddy, she tell me to kinder wander out t'orst Kingston, an' w'en I see mas'r Doctor comin', tell him to hurry long good, 'cause young mas'r Laz'rus come last night from Barbadoes, an' fetch a young ma'am, Marg'et."

"Lazarus come, and brought a wife!" echoed the doctor, in astonishment.

"Jes' so, mas'r. Dat w'at Miss Lyddy say tell mas'r Doctor."

Without reply, the doctor touched Pegasus with the

whip so often idly menacing Quasho, and hastened forward, leaving the slave to chuckle rapturously over his own skill, to eat another apple, pull a few turnips, and finally to saunter home to an abundant dinner; for the slavery of Massachusetts was actually the benignant and patriarchal institution so loudly claimed farther south, at a later day.

Riding rapidly past the widow Cushman's house, with only one sidelong look at its empty windows, the doctor was reluctantly halted before a substantial mansion, whose site is now occupied by Davis Hall. It was the house built by Francis LeBaron for his bride, Mary Wilder, almost fifty years before; it was the birthplace of his three children, and had until lately been the home of Francis, his youngest son, whose widow, sister of Doctor Lazarus' first wife, now stood forth to intercept him.

"What is it, Sarah? I'm in haste," demanded the doctor impatiently, for he was not fond of his doubly related sister-in-law, and liked her all the less that she was about to marry Joseph Swift, and carry the old house out of the family.

"Why, I wanted to tell you, Lazarus, that your boy Lazarus has got home from Barbadoes, and brought a wife and two or three blacks, and" —

"In that case, I had best get home myself, and take some order in the matter," interposed the doctor with a smile, and touching his cocked hat with a gesture which Sarah LeBaron suspected, and perhaps not unjustly, of mockery, he rode on.

A few rods further brought Pegasus to the end of Main Street, and nearly opposite to a large gambrel-roofed and somewhat imposing-looking house, built in 1703 by Doctor Francis LeBaron, who just as it was

completed went to occupy a very narrow and quiet dwelling upon Burying Hill, leaving this estate to his son Lazarus. A big meetinghouse now covers its site, but more interesting discourses still come out of the phantom walls of the old than the visible inclosure of the new building.

Pegasus, feeling that he was master of the situation, stiffened his neck, quickened his gait, and resistlessly bore round the eastern corner of the house, and down a narrow driveway to his stable in the rear, where both Pompey and Prince, Quasho's co-laborers, stepped forward to take the bridle, with a grin of welcome.

Two more black fellows lay sprawling in the sunshine, upon the barn floor, but the doctor, only glancing at them enough to see that they were strangers, and that he had interrupted a luxurious gossip, made his way into the house. As he opened the kitchen door, he paused in dismay, for Pandemonium and Babel are hard for a quiet man to encounter, without some long breath of preparation. The great kitchen, and not only that, but the sitting-room beyond, as could be seen through the open door, seemed full of men, women, children, negro servants, and little dogs, while a great green parrot, chained to a perch in the window, was shrieking profanity and maniacal laughter to the extent of his powers.

"There's father! Children, hush! Lazarus, here's father! Hannah and Teresa, stop that noise! Mary, do pick up Bartlett! Joseph, throw something over the parrot! Sister Margaret, can't that black woman of yours carry your baby upstairs for a little?"

"Lydia, you seem to be the only responsible person left in the house," suggested the doctor, rather severely; "your brothers and sisters are all distraught."

"My duty to you, father!" exclaimed a blithe voice, while a sligher, milder copy of the doctor's own marked personality extricated himself from the crowd, and came forward with extended hand.

"Glad to see you, son Lazarus," replied the father, cordially taking the proffered hand, but looking past the young man at a pallid, dark-eyed girl, who timidly approached, with a half smile upon her sweet lips.

"And this is my wife, Margaret, father," added the young man, turning to take her hand and convey it to that he still held. "There has never been the opportunity of writing to tell you of my marriage, until of late, and so I thought best to come myself and show you my fair excuse."

"I did not know there had been so strange a check of communication with Sent Luzee, in the last year" — began the doctor.

"Oh, I beg pardon, but I have been gone from there this six months. Peter Newsome, Margaret's father, offered me a fair opening for practice" —

"Well, well, we shall have time to speak of all that, my boy, and need not keep your wife waiting just now," interposed the father, courteously bowing to the new-comer. "You are very welcome, daughter Margaret, and Lazarus shall be pardoned some inattention to his father, if he does not neglect his wife."

He drew her nearer, and kissed the smooth, creamy cheek, through which, at the salute, a rich color glowed.

"I thought she'd be my best excuse, sir," said the proud young husband. "And Flora, bring lilly mas'r here. There, father, there's your namesake; there's Lazarus number three!"

The grinning negress, resplendent in her bandana

turban and Turkey-red cotton gown, drew near, and, as she held her nursling up to his grandfather's grave inspection, it was pretty to see the likeness in unlikeness of the three Lazarus LeBarons, and mark how all reproduced the features of Francis, the founder of their house.

"A fine little lad, a sturdy boy," said the elder, lightly touching the child's brow, "and I shall see more, both of him and his mother, later; just now, I will ask you for a little breakfast, Lydia, and then must visit some sick folk hereabout. Have there been any calls, Joseph?"

Joseph, a young fellow, not yet twenty-one, but studying medicine with his father, and acting as his assistant, was about to reply, when his sister Mary, a sprightly girl, just entering her teens, suggested with elaborate innocence:—

"You were called to Parson Leonard's last night, you know, Joe, and had to stay till the nine o'clock bell rang."

"Is any one sick at the parson's?" began the doctor, but seeing the angry color flash up into Joseph's face, and catching the flicker of mischief in Mary's blue eyes, the father closed his lips rather tightly, and left the room to go to his own private den. For this was the age of parental reserve and of filial reverence, and had Mary LeBaron's mother been alive, and the family in the bands of strict discipline, she would never have dared to jest in her father's presence, even upon so tempting a theme as her brother's courtship.

Something of this the doctor felt as he strode through the hall and mounted the shallow stairs, with their carved balusters and rail, imported by his father from England.

"Yes," muttered he, taking the key of his study from a pocket in the long-flapped waistcoat showing far beneath the claret-colored riding-coat still buttoned across his chest, "yes, they need a mother, Lyddy as well as the young ones, and the house cries out for a housewife — it is no self-seeking folly" —

And then the doctor stood and looked thoughtfully around the dingy back room into which he had locked himself; a very unattractive room to most observers, with sad-colored walls, broken only by a torn and patched map of Europe, and some rude shelves holding a few French books, a score or so of leather-covered medical works, with about half as many choice volumes of Homer and some of the Latin poets, daintily bound in white and gold vellum, and bringing their price even then in the Dutch and German marts whence they came. To-day they would be priceless.

Above the high mantelshelf with its plated candlesticks and snuffers, not ranked then as ornaments, but articles of homely necessity, was tacked a piece of red cloth, called harrateen, left over from covering the seats of the best bedroom chairs, and stolen by the doctor while his wife's back was turned, much to her bewilderment.

If, however, disembodied spirits are allowed to return and fulfill the unsatisfied aspirations of this life, sure it is that Lydia Bartlett, mother of the seven children we have just encountered, had long ere this crept through the keyhole into this forbidden chamber, whose interior she had never in the flesh beheld.

And, granting this possibility, one can imagine the satisfaction with which she would exclaim in her new tongue, "If there is n't my piece of crimson harrateen!"

No doubt, also, this gentle ghost would curiously examine the relics to which the harrateen formed a background, — a silver spoon with a perfectly round bowl, a broken ring empty of its gem, and a pair of tiny balances, the scales and beam of chased silver, and the cords of green silk ; the weights lay beneath in the round-cornered tortoise-shell case that had traveled many a mile, some fifty years earlier, in the pocket of Francis, father of Lazarus LeBaron. A little lock of light brown hair lay in one of these scales upon a bit of paper whereon was written the one word Faith ; the other was weighed down by a silver penny, beneath which was written Lucre.

The hair was his father's, the faith was his mother's, and the Queen Anne penny represented the comfortable property of that mother's second husband.

It was a neat little epigram, kept by the doctor for his own private enjoyment, unless indeed poor Lydia's ghost had ere this wondered feebly over it.

For the rest, the room contained a large table crowded with papers, memorandum books, a great wooden ink-stand supporting a thicket of quill pens, a pounce box, some wax and a taper, various specimens of drugs in various stages of preparation, some vials, and the nameless litter of a student's table ; disorderly, to be sure, but scrupulously neat, for no woman ever yet excelled Lazarus LeBaron in this feminine virtue.

A great leather-covered armchair was placed at the end of the table nearest to the fireplace, while a piece of homespun carpet and a footstool suggested cozy visions of a pair of slippered feet propped upon the stool and toasting their soles, as eyes of dreamy content watched the flames flaring up the wide chimney, and the fra-

grance of cedar logs and pitch-pine and bayberry twigs floated through the room. At the corner of the hearth stood a clay furnace, a box of charcoal, some crucibles, and a small still, while on shelves above lay retorts, and various glass utensils of strange shape and air, brought home from Holland by the doctor, and never exhibited either to his family or his townsmen.

There were those who whispered that "the French doctor" had bequeathed to his son uncanny secrets bordering upon art magic; that the herbs he so carefully culled in the fields, or cultivated in the lush garden stretching down behind his house to the Town Brook, were components of the Elixir Vitæ whose formula the doctor was always striving to reproduce. They said that he sought for the Philosopher's Stone; they said all the things their forefathers had said in the beginning, of Faustus, and Grandier, and Galileo, and many another man too learned and too reticent for the comprehension of his neighbors. Lucky was it for Lazarus LeBaron that he lived in an age when these beginnings of gossip had ceased to lead to any deadly end, and were perhaps rather an advantage than a danger to their object.

None the less was the student very careful of allowing any, even the nearest and dearest of his household, to inquire too curiously into the occupations or the instruments confined within those sacred walls, and it was no doubt some resolution to continue this reserve that formed itself in the man's mind, as, leaning an elbow on the mantelshelf, his eyes wandered from the relics upon their harrateen background to the crucibles at his feet.

"No, my dear, you'll never come in here!" muttered he, with a slow, serene smile.

A broad leather-covered sofa, or settee, as it was called, stood against the wall opposite the windows, and now served as the doctor's nightly couch; for since his wife's death he had given up the great northeast chamber to his four daughters and baby son; the other front bedroom was a guest-chamber; and Joseph with Lazarus before he went away had occupied the fourth room, a rambling barrack, out of which a curious low-browed door led into the slave quarters, where, in two little bedrooms over a joyous, disorderly kitchen, Pompey with Phyllis his wife, Prince, a fine stalwart young fellow, and Quasho, already introduced, feasted, laughed, and slept in great peace and contentment.

But now Lazarus, who a couple of years before had gone forth to seek his professional fortunes in the West Indies, had come home in the double dignity of married man and guest, and must be promoted to the spare chamber. Let us pause a moment to inspect it. Behold an imposing room, with both bed and window curtains as well as chair bottoms of the famous crimson harra-teen; a "chist-of-draws," such as is nowadays called a chiffonier, (a name not more correct, and not nearly so expressive as the old one), made of black walnut tree wood, a rare and precious material in those days when no white man knew that it grew abundantly in our own Western States, or could have brought home more than his own back-load if he had; a tall spindle-legged toilet table, also furnished with drawers, many and complicated, and covered with white fringed dimity, stood between the front windows, with a mirror above it, the carved and gilded wooden frame representing a twining rose-stem, finished at the top with a cluster of blossoms and foliage. The doctor had himself bought this in Paris,

whither he went before his first marriage, and it was respectfully looked upon not only by his own household, but by all his townsfolk.

The painted and polished floor of this stately bower was partly covered by a square of English carpet, and the fireplace was surrounded by Dutch tiles representing with minute fidelity various Scriptural scenes ; upon the red sandstone hearth were arranged a ponderous fender, andirons, and fire set, all of brass and polished like the sun. A fire artistically laid with backlog, top-log, forestick, lightwood, and kindlers, with shavings invitingly peeping out, to welcome the match, gave promise of a comfortable blaze by and by, which should dispel the chill and forbidding atmosphere of this closed room, which, truth to tell, had proved a little overwhelming in its heavy grandeur to Margaret, the young wife, who in her tropical home had never seen a fireplace or its furnishing, a carpet, or even so much as a suit of harateen curtains. Nay, even the feather bed with its superincumbent sack of eider down, which when warmed by the body rose gradually in stifling billows of irritating heat around the sleeper, was a surprise and a terror to her, accustomed as she was to simply a sacking with one linen sheet fastened tightly over it, and another to use as the only covering.

Furthermore, this enormous pile of feathers and down was heaped with English blankets, a crimson quilted spread, and more of that horrible eider down, tacked into a puff made of two old brocade dresses.

No wonder Lazarus the younger found his Barbadoes wife in tears when he followed her to that sombre guest-chamber, on the night of their arrival, and was obliged to reassure her with many tender jests and caresses.

The doctor's reverie has lasted quite through this long digression, and might have lasted longer but for a timid tap on the door.

"Who is it?" demanded he impatiently.

"It's me, father, and" —

"Say 'It's I, father,' if you please, Lydia, before you go on."

"It's I, father," responded Lydia meekly, although so small a store of meekness went to her composition that she reserved it all for filial use. "And I came up to tell you that two of the selectmen, Squire Lothrop and Mr. James Warren, are below, seeking you."

"I hope you put them in some other place than that Bedlam I found you in," remarked the doctor, without opening the door; and Lydia, always meekly, replied: —

"Yes, sir, I put them in the northwest parlor."

"They won't want to stay long in that chilly room," muttered the host, and, waiting until he heard Lydia's steps upon the stairs, he cast one regretful look around his study, and followed her, locking the door and putting the key in his pocket.

The northwest parlor, where the visitors stood awaiting their host, was a room of even sterner majesty than the best bedroom, inasmuch as a long mirror at either end reflected its chilly dignity, and multiplied to infinity the square mahogany table, the eight great chairs covered in scarlet morocco, the rosewood case standing open to display the handles of twelve knives and twelve forks made of solid silver, not the poor shells one may so cheaply buy to-day, the two penitential "lolling-chairs," whose straight backs, long legs, and slippery leather seats were a satire upon their name, the floor painted and varnished like polished white marble, and

the square of Turkey carpet, coming just inside the legs of the chairs, stiffly ranged around the room. The only spot offering a timid hope of comfort was the fireplace, where shone a magnificent copper set of andirons, with shovel, tongs, and poker all elaborately tipped with lion's-heads. But although the chimney-back, itself an heraldic casting, was blackened by the genial blaze of bygone fires, it was to-day painfully cold and clean, and the two men leaning on either end of the high mantel-piece, with its decoration of conch shells and some curious bits of glass and china, looked as chill and miserable as the complimentary mourners at a winter funeral.

"Ugh!" shivered the doctor, giving his hand to each with cordial grasp. "This room is worse than out-of-doors. Come into the other room, gentlemen, where, though there may be some disorder, there is also a fire."

He turned and laid his hand upon the brass thumb-latch, bright and cold as ice; but Isaac Lothrop stepped forward, and said in a voice of mysterious meaning, —

"Nay, Doctor! The weather is not yet so very cold, and some matters are best treated behind closed doors; surely a little chill is not to be set against our duty of warding off the fires of hell."

"Surely not, Judge Lothrop," replied the doctor, with a faint gleam of humor in his eyes. "But where do these fires threaten to break out, in our little town?"

"James Warren can tell you, and as his house is but across the way from Consider Howland's" —

"Your own is as near, Judge," interrupted Warren, pleasantly. "But to make the matter short, Doctor, both Lothrop and I have marked how a certain strapping young fellow, calling himself master and part owner of the schooner *Dolphin*, trading coastwise for the most

part, makes Plymouth his principal port of entry, whithersoever his charter party may lay the voyage."

"Yes, my son Lazarus came but now passenger in the Dolphin from Barbadoes," said the doctor. "He spoke of Captain Hammatt as a pleasant fellow and good navigator."

"He did!" exclaimed Lothrop. "That is well, and to the purpose. We knew that Lazarus came by the Dolphin, and it was partly to have his opinion of the young man that we are here."

"But what has Hammatt done amiss, or why does the town take order with him?" demanded the doctor.

"That is the very matter in hand. Speak out, Warren, and tell what has come under your eyes."

"Well, nothing so very unheard of." And genial James Warren smiled good-naturedly, in spite of Lothrop's magisterial frown, while the doctor's gleam of satiric humor answered the smile.

"I was standing idly by the window in my study, which, as you know, looks across North Street to Consider Howland's house, on the opposite corner; and as the casement lay open, I saw this Hammatt standing with his arm around the waist of Mistress Lucy Howland; and as I still looked, in some bewilderment, for the maiden is reputed as good as she is fair" —

"Nay, she is very brown, like all the Howlands," interposed the doctor whimsically, and Warren indulged in a constrained smile, as he replied: —

"You have reason, Doctor. 'Black but comely,' if one may quote" —

"Pardon me, brethren, but are not we rather straying from the record?" interrupted the judge dryly. "As you looked in at the open casement of Mr. Howland's house, you saw" —

"I saw Captain Hammatt put his arm around Lucy Howland's waist, and kiss her heartily, and more than once," replied Warren succinctly.

"And did the maid resist?" inquired the doctor, repressing a smile.

"Nay, I marked not that she did. In very truth, I withdrew from the window, feeling myself in a dishonorable position."

"Why, yes, one does not willingly enact the part of Peeping Tom of Coventry. And what is your purpose in this matter, Judge?"

"To ascertain at once whether the young man's views are honorable, and whether Master Howland is cognizant of these proceedings," replied Lothrop promptly. "I for one am not minded to give in to the sinful laxity of morals and the weakening of discipline that marks our day. I hold with those who have gone before, that the fathers of a community are set to watch as them who must give account, over the doings of those in their charge; and I opine that it is our duty, as selectmen of this town of Plymouth, to assure ourselves of the character and purpose of every stranger who sets foot within our limits, and to take heed that no wolf creeps in to molest our lambs."

"Surely, surely!" exclaimed the doctor, more gravely, as his mind reverted to his own motherless girls, especially handsome and headstrong Lydia, Lucy Howland's great friend and confidante. "I agree with you, Judge Lothrop, and am right glad you will take some steps to sustain the purity and order of our town. What measures do you propose?"

"To summon the young man and woman before my justice court, and admonish them," replied Lothrop

severely, but Warren, mild and indulgent as his wont, shook his head,

“Nay, brother, that seems to me an extreme measure for the first. Let us remember the fable of the furious blast, which only caused the traveler to wrap his cloak more tightly round him, while under the warmth of sunshine he willingly cast it off. I would in turn suggest that our good doctor here, who is the family physician of the Howlands, should make a friendly visit, and in course of talk with Consider should tell him what has been seen” —

“Nay, Master Warren, but I have seen nothing, and so can tell nothing,” interrupted the doctor decidedly. “It is for you who have spied this unholy sight to describe it to our friend Consider, and bear the brunt of the tempest that shall surely break upon your head.”

“’Sider hath a fiery temper,” remarked Warren meditatively.

“Then, since you gentlemen find me too hard, and I must think you far too soft, suppose we all go together and investigate this matter,” suggested Lothrop, with a little impatience. “Come, Doctor, get on your hat, and we will move at once.”

“May I beg five minutes’ grace while I swallow some meat and drink, for none save a draught of milk and a bannock at Plympton has passed my lips to-day. And let me offer you both a glass of wine or aqua vitæ; it must be near eleven o’clock.”

“A little past,” replied Warren with a smile. “We found many of our friends at the Bunch of Grapes as we came up the street, and joined Josiah Cotton and some of the rest in a glass of bitters, so no more for me.”

“Ever a temperate man, Warren; and you, Judge, are almost too much so for your own good. Follow Paul’s advice to Timothy, my friend, and do not ill treat your stomach. It is your best friend.”

“Why, if my doctor orders me to do so, I can but obey,” replied the judge, relaxing his grave visage to a smile. “And yet no more just now, I am obliged to you.”

“Well, then, I will be at Master Warren’s in a quarter of an hour, if that suits you both,” and the doctor hastened with numbed fingers to open the hall door and ceremoniously attend his guests to the top of the steps.

“I am so glad, father, that they are gone, for you will be starved with cold and hunger,” said a voice behind him, as Lydia peeped out of the sitting-room door. “See, all is ready for you.”

“Ah, that looks pleasant!” exclaimed her father, striding over to the fireplace, and seating himself in the roundabout leather-bottomed chair drawn up beside a little table laid with a very comfortable breakfast, or rather lunch.

A steaming tankard of spiced ale, with a roasted crab-apple bobbing up and down upon its frothy surface, was the central ornament, and the doctor took a hearty draught with the eagerness of a chilled and hungry man.

“Ah, that is comfortable, Lyddy,” said he, rubbing his hands over the fire, and munching a slice of warm gingerbread. “And what have you done with the mob that was here but now?”

“I sent them all different ways before I made ready for you,” replied Lydia, with the air of one who knew what she did and how to do it. “Margaret and little Lazarus” —

“Call him the child, or the baby, or what you will; only do not din my own name into my ears perpetually, or I shall grow to loathe it,” exclaimed the doctor more irritably than he often spoke, and, with a hasty good-by, he snatched up his hat and left the house.

His tall fair daughter went to the window and watched him down the street. A handsome young woman, as all men allowed, with the grand figure and bearing of her sires, and with a peculiar creamy velvety complexion, richly but not deeply tinted with the red of a peach's sunny cheek; her eyes, bluer than her father's and very bright, had perhaps a little too much of the same keenness and criticism, and at times accented too strongly the somewhat haughty curve of the nose and lips. A woman to gallantly hold her own whether for right or wrong, and command respect whether she won love or not.

“He does n't like to have his grandson called Lazarus,” murmured she, watching her father's back, in its claret-colored coat and cocked hat, with the black-tied cue beneath. “Is it that he would not have Lazarus married? Is it Margaret — no, she is so pretty all men must like her. Is it — yes, yes, it is a grandchild, and he not yet an old man. Perhaps, — why, yes, — what more like than that he should marry again! And how hard I have tried to make home homely for him!”

“S'pose I take dese yer' things 'way, Miss Lyddy,” suggested a cheerful voice at her back, and, turning sharply, Lydia confronted a portly, genial-faced negress, dressed in a homespun check petticoat-and-short-gown, with a portentous turban on her head, and a string of Guinea-gold beads around her neck.

“Yes, take them away, Phyllis, and lay the table for dinner. It must be near noon.”

"Sun jes' a-crapin' roun' to de noon-mark on de phial, Pomp sez," replied Phyllis, with an air of importance.

"Dial! Dial, Phyllis! How often I've told you that! And what have you got those beads on for? They look very absurd with your working clothes; I suppose you want to show off before Mr. Laz'rus's servants."

"'Pears like you could n' nebber bear to see dese yer' beads, Miss Lyddy, dough you knows well 'nough, chile, dat I airnt em honest, wif de venters mas' doctor 'lowed me to make in mas' Watson's schooner" —

"There, there, don't stand talking, and don't be impertinent. Of course the beads are your own" —

"Spec's if dey was Miss Lyddy's own, she'd like de looks ob 'em better," grumbled the negress as she flounced away with her tray, but her young mistress had turned back to the window, and deep in reverie seemed to hear nothing

CHAPTER VI.

THE LASS THAT LOVED A SAILOR.

To understand how Mr. James Warren and Squire Lothrop were both of them in a position to overlook the domestic affairs of Consider Howland's house, it is necessary to know something of the topography of Plymouth.

The Main Street of the village, then as now, was a short straight bit of highway, its southern end opening on Leyden Street, where stood Dr. LeBaron's house nearly opposite this opening. Proceeding north, a few doors from the corner where Governor Bradford's house had once stood, one arrived at the Bunch of Grapes tavern, a genial hostelry built in the Dutch fashion, with the upper story projecting some eighteen inches over the lower, and ornamented at either corner with a great pendulous bunch of grapes carved in wood, a device as suggestive of the good cheer within as the "bush" of olden times.

Still trending north, Main Street stopped in a vague, confused sort of way in an open space, now called Shirley Square, whence opened a road pursuing the same direction, variously called the Kingston Road, the Boston Way, the King's Highway, and nowadays Court Street; for at its westerly side lies, as we have seen, the Great Gutter, now become Court Square, for the sufficient reason that the Court House stands at its head. On the corner of this road and this square stands a

goodly brick mansion upon the site of that earlier house where pretty widow Cushman sat and pondered smilingly her doctor's last advice.

Returning to Shirley Square, we find another short straight street opening from its lower or eastern side, and running down to the water's edge and around Cole's Hill, where slept, and still sleep, the Pilgrims in their undistinguishable graves, with the gray Rock between them and the water.

This, now called North Street, was then generally known as Howland Street, most of the land upon its northern side remaining in possession of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the Pilgrim John, to which latter category belonged Consider Howland, whose house and grounds formed the upper northern corner. On the opposite corner, facing on Main Street, stood a great gambrel-roofed colonial structure, built by that Colonel John Winslow just now fighting for Great Britain in the West Indies, and leading poor Peleg Samson into great fatigues and dangers. But as a soldier who is also a widower does not need a big colonial house, the colonel, before leaving home, sold his Plymouth property to his brother-in-law, James Warren, husband of handsome, haughty Penelope Winslow.

Forming a triangle with these two houses, as it stood on the other side of Shirley Square facing the head of North Street, was a large and imposing mansion owned and occupied by Colonel, or Judge, or as he was familiarly called, Squire Lothrop, who, standing upon his front doorsteps, could look down North Street and his own new wharf at its foot to the sea beyond, or into the windows of his neighbors Warren or Howland, as the fancy seized him. In fact, very little could or did occur

in either house without becoming matter of friendly interest to the inmates of the other two, — an interest occasionally resulting in action, as in the present instance.

An appreciation of this position crossed the mind of Lazarus LeBaron, while he stood for a moment with the great brass latch of Warren's door in his hand and looked about him; and the smile in his eyes passed to his lips, when he saw the door of the Lothrop house open, and the worthy magistrate, in his broad-skirted red camlet coat, flapped waistcoat, black velvet breeches, capacious silk stockings, and buckled shoes, descend the steps and cross the square as nimbly as a great regard for his own dignity would allow.

"I saw you from my window, Doctor, and came at once, for we have little time to spare before the noon bell strikes. Ah, here is brother Warren!"

"Yes, I chanced to be looking out o' window and saw you both," said Warren simply, whereupon the doctor took snuff, a great resource of his when wishing to conceal amusement, or indeed any emotion.

"Probably Master Howland has seen us all by this time, and will be awaiting our visit," said he gravely, and led the way across the head of North Street to the old many-gabled house, with its wide low casements, their little diamond-shaped panes of greenish glass set in lead, the upper story projecting over the lower, and a great chimney eating out the heart of the house.

Like many of his townsmen, Howland, although as gently born and as well-to-do as most, did not disdain to entertain such strangers as preferred his quiet house to the noisier hospitalities of the Bunch of Grapes, and in this way young Hammatt had become an inmate of the house, and found opportunity to cultivate pretty Lucy's acquaintance.

The oaken door stood wide open, showing a wainscoted hall, both deep and wide, and a great rambling staircase. As the three gentlemen entered and hesitated which way to turn, for a sitting-room lay at either side the door, a portly figure emerged from the gloom of the hall, and a jovial voice cried: —

“Welcome, gentlemen! ’Tis not often you come neighboring in these days, but you’re heartily welcome. This way, this way!”

And rather decidedly, the master of the house ushered his guests into the left-hand or westerly room.

“’Twas in the other room I saw the young folks courting,” whispered Warren to Lothrop, who nodded judicially.

“Nay, Howland, you can’t complain that I am not here often enough,” protested the doctor pleasantly. “’Twas but last week I came to plaster up little Tom’s broken head; and how is he by this time?”

“He’s well enough, the young rascal,” replied the father carelessly. “It’s not of doctor’s visits I’m talking now, however, but of friendly calls and pleasant chats. Why, we four men were boys together at school not so long since, and Master Sparhawk flogged us all impartially, though now I think twice on ’t, I believe James Warren seldom gave old Sparhawk a chance, for he was so ready at his task and so blameless in his behavior. And you too, Judge, you often went scot-free, just because of the majesty of your look, I fancy. The dominie was scared of you; but the doctor and I, — we caught it, eh, Doctor?”

“Not so much as I would give two such boys, if they were in my care to-day,” replied the doctor genially, while Master Howland, setting a square brass-bound

casket upon the table, threw it open, disclosing a trio of high-shouldered gilt bottles, with three glasses to match set in sockets behind the bottles.

"Now here is a case of Spanish *liqueurs*, boys, just brought in by Captain Hammatt of the Dolphin, the same craft that fetched your boy, Doctor."

"Ay."

"The case has not been broached yet, and you three shall be first to touch lips to the three glasses. Which shall it be, Squire, — Maraschino, Anise, or Parfait d'Amour?"

To refuse would in those days have been counted an insult, and the three gentlemen each took a drop of Anise, merely remarking that eleven o'clock was past, and dinner over-nigh at hand to more than taste strong waters.

"And truth to tell, Consider," said Lothrop, laying down the little Dutch glass, and reverting for the moment to habits of boyish familiarity, "we have come to ask you some questions which you must take in good part as they are meant."

"Questions upon what matter?" demanded Howland abruptly.

"Nay, now, man, take it in good part, I say, for, as you claimed but now, we have been boys together, and still, I hope, are friends; but will you tell us of your courtesy if this Captain Hammatt of the Dolphin is courting your daughter Lucy with your knowledge and consent?"

"Oh! I cry your pardon, gentlemen!" exclaimed Howland, thrusting the glasses back into the case and slamming down the lid, as signifying that hospitality was no longer in order. "Had you told me that you

came as selectmen to inquire into the character of an inn-holder's guests, I would have shown you more reverence and less attempt at familiarity" —

"Nay now, nay now, neighbor," interrupted James Warren pacifically, "why will you be so jealous and so peppery? We come as friends and old school-fellows, and as fathers, careful for your daughter as for our own" —

"Thank you for nothing, neighbor; I come not spying round to see if Lyddy LeBaron and Ann Warren bear them as modest maids should, and I'd have you know that Lucy Howland needs no more looking after than they."

"Why, surely not, nor did we say it" — began Judge Lothrop, but at that moment the door of the opposite parlor opened suddenly, and a young man's voice was heard saying: —

"I'll be back anon, mistress."

Howland strode to the door of the room where stood his three visitors, and throwing it open exclaimed: —

"Here is Captain Hammatt to answer for himself, and you too, Lucy; come you both in here and speak with these dignitaries who are inquiring after you."

A bold-looking young fellow, dark of skin, with eyes of that grayish hazel one finds in an eagle's head, and with a good deal of the same intensity of gaze always suggestive of discernment and power, but with a good-tempered and pleasant mouth, entered the room followed by Lucy Howland, a girl of seventeen, whose placid face wore already the look of calm intelligence and steadfast courage which moulded her life.

"Here is Captain Hammatt, gentlemen. Please open your business to him," said Master Howland, withdraw-

ing to the back of the room, and placing Lucy's hand under his arm.

"At your service, sirs," began the sailor, his eyes passing from one face to the other with keen inquiry.

"Captain Hammatt," returned Lothrop formally, "we are three of the men selected by this town to keep a fatherly eye upon its interests, and especially upon the safety and good conduct of its inhabitants and its visitors. In that capacity we think it right to inquire if you intend to make Mistress Lucy Howland your wife?"

The eagle-like eyes flashed a little and settled themselves steadily upon Lothrop's face, but very courteously the young man replied:—

"Mistress Howland's own father has not thought fit to ask me such a question, and much do I admire at the laws that empower any other man to do so! In England every man's house is his castle, but in this new country you seem to have found out some better way. Howbeit, since you have in a way tripped my anchor for me, I'll e'en make sail as best I may. My intentions of marriage with this young gentlewoman are depending upon her intentions with regard to me, and those you have not given me sea-room to arrive at as I would, so I must now make them out as I can. Mistress Lucy, will you take me for your bachelor, and wed me so soon as I have somewhat more to offer you?"

He stepped forward as he spoke, his broad-leafed hat in one hand, the other extended toward the young girl, whose comely face, from pale, grew rosy-red, but dropping her father's arm, and modestly laying her hand in that of her lover, she answered in a voice both still and

clear, "Yes, Captain Hammatt, with my father's and mother's consent, I will be your wife when you and they see fit."

"Bravely spoken, my lass, bravely said!" cried Consider Howland, laying a hand upon his girl's head, and turning to look triumphantly at the three selectmen, who in turn gazed rather sheepishly at him, until Doctor LeBaron, with a laugh that did him credit, exclaimed:

"Why, there now, Master Howland, we grave old fellows have helped a very pretty little love-affair to its crisis, and surely you are our debtors! Will not you once more open that chest, and let us each taste a drop or so of *Parfait d'Amour* to the health of the young couple?"

"Ay, old friend, so let it be," cried placable Warren; and Judge Lothrop silently extended his hand to Howland, who seized and shook it heartily, while the last clouds of anger vanished from his choleric yet genial face, and the toast was drunk in its most appropriate cordial with such fervor that the harmony so seriously threatened was restored to more than its first perfection, and the little party separated at sound of the noon bell, with mutual good will and satisfaction.

CHAPTER VII.

MOTHER CREWE'S CURSE AND ELDER FAUNCE'S BLESSING.

"DOCTOR, a word with you, at your leisure." The speaker was a tall, spare man, his gray hair falling upon his shoulders, and adding a wild impressiveness to his gaunt features and gleaming black eyes. He was clad in a suit of rusty black, and wore about his throat a white cravat, a good yard square when unfurled, while his hat was of the ungraceful shape known as "shovel;" for this was the Rev. Nathaniel Leonard, pastor of Plymouth, where as yet none had departed from the faith of the Pilgrims, or spoken of such a thing as division.

Doctor LeBaron, who was walking down Leyden Street, on his way to the wharves, stopped, and ceremoniously raised his hat, a salute as punctiliously returned by the parson, for manners were not yet out of fashion, any more than brotherly love.

"At your service, Dominie," said he pleasantly. "Shall I come in, or will you stroll down to the water-side with me? I am going to have a look at the Dolphin, young Hammatt's schooner."

"I will come with you, if I may fetch my walking-stick first."

"By all means. I will stand here and look at your new house, which, as my nearest neighbor, is an object of much interest. I never can cease to admire the courage and loyalty you displayed, Parson, in bringing all

this lumber from Norton. It is not every man who can carry his native forests about with him ; it is quite after the fashion of royal personages, and also of snails, neither of which folk ever sleep out of their own houses."

"Have your laugh, Doctor," replied the parson, coming out and closing the door ; then pausing in the road for an affectionate backward look at the house standing just above the site of the old Common house, first of Plymouth dwellings, he added, "Verily, friend, I do seem to conserve my native vigor and hopefulness by sheltering under Norton trees. It pleases me to lay hand upon some stout beam in garret or cellar, and say, 'Yes, we grew out of the same soil, and fed upon the same air and sunshine.'"

The doctor bestowed a rapid but strangely keen glance upon the face of the enthusiast, whose eyes, set steadily forward, seemed gazing upon some mirage of his native forests, and then he said : —

"You had somewhat to say to me, Dominie."

"Oh, ay, I remember. You know that Bathsheba Crewe is dead?"

"Yes, a week or ten days since."

"Well, the fellow that was to marry her, Ansel Ring, a sailor-man, I believe" —

"Yes."

"He was at my house last night, and would have me publish the banns between him and Molly Peach, niece of Goodwife Jones, out toward Manomet Ponds. I put him off until I should know more of the matter, for it seemed unseemly to me that before one maid was cold in her grave he should be so boldly wooing another. You were the poor girl's physician, and doubtless know something of the story. What say you?"

"What say I?" replied the doctor meditatively, as he paused with one foot upon Pilgrim Rock, which he tapped with his gold-headed cane, while he spoke. "Well, 't is hard to say, for between them those two were the death of that poor maid, buried no more than a week ago; and yet so mad are they upon each other that I doubt if they are hindered of marriage they may do worse. Certain it is that each will be the other's best punishment."

"Nay, then, a justice marriage is good enough for them. I for one will invoke no blessing on the heads of such reprobates. Let them be published, and then go to Squire Lothrop or some other magistrate to be coupled up."

"Perhaps that is best," replied the doctor absently. "'T is hard to say."

"Talking of the new wharf, gentlemen?" demanded a bluff voice, as a man stopped and took off his hat to the parson and the doctor.

"Why, no, Cook; and yet, now you speak of it, I remember some talk of it. Squire Lothrop is going to build one here, I believe, as a mate to that," and as he spoke the doctor pointed to the beginning of Long Wharf, "with a dock between, for the accommodation of his boats and small craft."

"Yes, but here's old Forefather's Rock," said Cook, tapping it with his foot. "It'll never do to cover that over. Why, my old gran'ther'd rise out of his grave to hear of it."

"Your grandfather, Josiah Cook?" inquired the doctor a little superciliously, or so it seemed to Cook, who answered stoutly:—

"Yes, sir. My gran'ther, Jacob Cook, was son of

Francis Cook, who came aboard the *Mayflower*, one of the old ancient settlers ; and gran'ther, he always said how his daddy told him that this rock was what they stepped onto when they first landed, and afterward, when they brought the women ashore, a maid called Mary Chilton was the first to set her foot on 't. That's the way gran'ther said, any way, and if you don't believe me, you can go over to Eel River and ask old Elder Faunce ; he's got eddication and he's an Elder in the church, so may be he knows."

"No more likely to than you, Josiah," replied the doctor cordially, "and I for one am greatly beholden to you for naming this matter. It would not do for the doorstep of the Pilgrim's home to be forgotten, would it, Mr. Leonard?"

"It seems to me rather a fond and foolish thing, Doctor LeBaron, to reverence stones and steps, and such matters. The Pilgrims, as they called themselves, were of those who know that here is no abiding place ; they sought a city that hath foundations."

"And still you fancy that Norton timber covers your head more pleasantly than such as is grown in Plymouth, Dominie," replied the doctor, pulling out his snuffbox, and offering the parson a pinch with a dry smile.

"But then of course it's not to be expected that them whose fathers didn't come in the *Mayflower* can feel just like them as did," remarked Josiah Cook, his eyes twisted up and his head on one side, as he squinted across the harbor at some moving object upon the beach. "Guess Finney's folks have gone a-plumming," added he abstractedly, as he walked away, leaving the two outsiders to look at each other and laugh.

"'Tis true enough, Dominie," remarked LeBaron,

"Our gran'thers were not of the Pilgrim stock, and yet we may be passably good townsmen. I am riding to Eel River presently, and will call and have a talk with the Elder, of this and other matters."

"And I ride to Manomet Ponds to speak with Ellis and the rest of his society; they fain would set up to be called the Second Church of Plymouth," said the parson. "If it please you, I will travel so far as Elder Faunce's house with you, and get his opinion upon their business."

From this morning chat between the doctor and the minister grew two important events, both affecting our story.

The first was, that, some three weeks later, Ansel Ring and Molly Peach were quietly married by Squire Lothrop in the office adjoining his house, in the presence of two or three of the townsmen, who, coming in to sign a deed, were detained by the judge as witnesses.

Although not strictly in the line of his duty, Lothrop, having pronounced these candidates man and wife, proceeded to deliver a short homily to them, and, touching distinctly upon their irregular course of wooing, charged them gravely to take heed lest a bad beginning should bring about a worse ending.

Not a little disturbed by this rebuke and by the coldness of the witnesses, the new-made couple somewhat precipitately left the office, omitting to close the door; so that those within, as well as several passers-by and a little knot of loungers at Consider Howland's door, were all aware of a tall, emaciated figure suddenly rising from the lower step of the house-door and confronting Ansel and Molly, who at sight of that haggard face and streaming gray hair started back aghast.

"Mother Crewe!" gasped Molly, her face blanching piteously.

"Yes, Bathsheba Crewe's mother!" shrieked the old woman. "Bathsheba, that you murdered, you two — yes, murdered — the only child I had, and she lying in her grave and you dancing on it; but not for long, mark you, not for long, if a widow's curse can hender" —

"Oh, don't curse us, don't curse us!" screamed Molly, falling on her knees and covering her face with her hands. But mother Crewe's face showed no sign of relenting as she gazed upon that trembling figure, decked out with its poor attempt at bridal finery; indeed, an added scorn and detestation seemed to gather upon her brow, and, bending over the girl, her arms stiffly extended upward, she deliberately cursed her in all the detail of anathema to be gathered from the black and bitter pages of wizard lore: sleeping, waking, in her home and among her neighbors, in her body and in her soul, in her life and in her death, and in a dishonored grave. "And may your husband fail in all he undertakes and die of a broken heart, and may all your sons be cripples, and all your girls lightlied and deserted as mine has been, and no one to pity or to help, and" —

But here Judge Lothrop, who, with the rest, had listened until now, stepped down from his office door, and, laying a hand upon the old woman's shoulder, sternly bade her be silent, adding to Ansel Ring, who stood dazed and stupefied, "And you, man, rouse yourself, and take your wife hence as quickly as may be. When all is done, mother Crewe has a fair excuse for what she says."

The words and the voice of authority seemed to

break the uncanny spell, lying not only upon Ansel Ring, but upon all the spectators, and a tumult of voices, of counsels, of reproof, at once arose, in the midst of which mother Crewe, turning sharply into an alley leading up between Judge Lothrop's and Francis LeBaron's gardens to the Burying Hill, disappeared, and was not pursued.

A few minutes later the new-made husband and wife took their way to their bridal home as joyously and bravely as our first parents departed from Paradise.

The bystanders looked after them dubiously, and Josiah Cook voiced the feeling of most of his hearers when he said, "I would n't stand in that young feller's shoes for all the gold of Creshus, would you, now, Master Howland?"

Howland gravely shook his head. "I know one thing: no daughter of mine shall marry one of Ansel Ring's sons, and no son of mine shall wive one of his daughters — if I can help it."

"Well put in, neighbor," retorted the voice of Lazarus LeBaron, who had silently joined the group. "Our sons choose their own wives without our help, for the most part."

The other memorable event resulting from the conversation between Parson Leonard and Doctor LeBaron was, that, on a fine sunshiny morning, some three days after this untoward wedding, an open wagon was driven slowly and carefully into town from the direction of Eel River. In the centre of it was placed an armchair, and upon this was seated an old, old man, whose ninety-five years had bowed the once stalwart figure, seamed the face with a thousand wrinkles, bleached the hair to the whiteness of raw silk, and

stolen the strength of a voice once powerful in its Maker's praise ; but they had not been able to quench the memory, or dull the affections, or break the spirit of that brave soul ; for this was Elder Faunce, the last man left alive who had talked with the Pilgrims face to face, had heard their wondrous story from their own lips, and had followed one after another to their honored though nameless graves. And now to-day, hearing that the Forefather's Rock was in danger of itself going down to a forgotten grave, he had risen from his bed, and, tenderly protected and led by the children and grandchildren who cared for his old age, he had come to say good-by to the Rock, and to identify it with certainty for generations yet unborn.

As the wagon, with its escort of old and middle-aged and young descendants of the patriarch, passed slowly into town, it paused once that the Elder might drink from the Pilgrim Spring of "sweet and delicate water ;" and as a grandson brought him the clam-shell filled to overflowing, the old man tasted thrice, then poured the rest upon the ground, saying : —

"It is as the water from the well of Bethlehem."

And so the wagon rolled on up the hill to the centre of the town ; for by this way would the patriarch be brought, that he might look once more at the old church, just about to be replaced by a new one, and the Burying Hill, and the ancient houses which as a boy he had seen erected.

And here the people gathered indeed around this messenger from the days gone by : the old men, who might have been his sons ; the younger ones, who remembered in their childhood gazing upon his white hair and bowed form as the type of old age ; the children, who

had heard their parents talk of him, and now stood wondering, their own life as yet too scant to appreciate the fullness of his.

Young men and maidens, old men and children, they gathered in a sort of hushed excitement, waiting when he waited, and following when he moved ; for word had gone forth in some mysterious way that Elder Faunce had come among them for the last time, and that he had somewhat to declare.

Through the town, down Leyden Street, past the doctor's house and past the minister's, that strange cortége moved slowly on, until, passing under the brow of Cole's Hill to the Rock, it halted, and two stalwart grandsons, stepping into the wagon, raised the old man tenderly, and stayed him while others upon the ground helped him to dismount. Then a score of old friends pressed forward, and would have grasped his hands and welcomed him ; but he, with solemn majesty, moved on unheeding, until, standing close beside the Rock, he took off his hat, and simply said : —

“Thank God !”

No prayer could have been so eloquent, no words so full of meaning, and first one, then another, and finally all who stood near, bared their heads, and muttered “Amen.”

Covering his white locks, and leaning upon his staff, the Elder spoke, and told the people how he had talked man to man with the last of the Pilgrims, with John Howland and his wife, with John Alden, and Giles Hopkins, and George Soule, and Francis Cook and his son John, and Mistress Cushman, born Mary Allerton, who died but yesterday, in 1699.

“And these men and these women all told the same

story, children," said the old man, looking round upon the people, while such stillness reigned that the surf breaking upon the outer beach became distinctly audible, its grand diapason bearing up the quavering and slender voice. "They all said that upon this Rock they stepped ashore, from the first man to the last; ay, and the women too, for John Winslow's wife, who was Mary Chilton, came here before she died, even as I have come to-day, and I stood by while she set her foot upon it, and laughed, and said she was the first woman of the Mayflower to step upon that rock, and now she stepped on it for the last time, for this was her seventy-fifth birthday. And ye, children of my own blood, I charge you to remember how, year by year, while God lent me strength, I brought you here, on Forefather's Day, and set your feet upon this Rock, and told you what mighty things the Fathers had done for you, and laid upon you to do them honor, and to serve God even as they served Him, with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your strength, and all your mind, — yes, and with your life, whensoever He calls for it.

"Do I say what is true, my children?"

"It is true, grandsir," spoke out the nearest man; and a score of voices echoed, "It is true."

"Then come ye forward, sons and grandsons, and put your feet upon the Rock once more in my sight, and never forget this day, you nor your children's children, to the last generation."

So man by man, down to the boy of ten, the Faunces came and stood bareheaded on the Rock, and passed on, until the tale was told; and finally the Elder himself knelt down, and kissed that precious relic, and prayed that it never should be forgotten, or the sons of Pilgrim sires fall short of the bright example of their fathers.

Then, exhausted and silent, he suffered his children to raise him and place him again in what had become, in some sort, a triumphal chariot, and so take him home by way of the water-side, followed by a vast concourse of people.

Nor is this story a fiction of the novelist, but true, word for word, as any may read it in the annals of the Old Colony.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LIFE FOR A LEMON.

PLYMOUTH BEACH was not always the barren sand-spit it now is. The Pilgrims found it well covered with timber and fruit trees, of which one hundred and twenty-five years later a fair grove still lingered. This was some six hundred yards in length, extending from side to side of the beach, and inclosing in its heart a lawn of thick turf, with a spring of delicious water at one side.

Four great beech trees stood like sentinels at the corners of this fair oasis, and, pendent from their branches, thick vines, laden with grapes of three colors, wove a wall of living tapestry more excellent than even that of Bayeux.

Near the water, upon the inner curve of the beach, clustered wild plum and cherry trees, covered in their season with fruit, while sweet fern, wild roses, and bayberry bushes perfumed the salt breath of the sea.

An idyllic spot, and a favorite one with the summer merry-makers of old Plymouth until, in the time of the French Revolution, a great storm, followed by a mighty tide, swept across the beach, drowning the shrubs, burying the sward in sand, and so poisoning the roots of the great trees that they soon died.

Perhaps it was the back-water of that wave of Fraternity and Equality which brought all men to a

level by destroying the pleasant things wherewith those of cultivated tastes had embellished the world.

Forty years, however, still remained before that evil day, and little was it foreseen by the gay company gathered in the intervale upon a summer day, a century and a half ago, enjoying one of the picnics for which Plymouth was famous in the old time when everybody was everybody's cousin, or at least kith, if not quite kin, and the town was one great family.

The especial occasion of this picnic was to afford Colonel John Winslow, just home from the West Indies, and about to sail for Nova Scotia, an opportunity to meet his friends, and say a cheerful good-by. And surely the friends were here: Edward Winslow and the Warrens, of course, since the colonel was visiting his sister Penelope, and the Whites and the Howlands, his near kin, and the Watsons and the LeBarons and the Lothropes and the Cottons, the Cushmans and the Thomases and the Bartletts, and Parson Leonard with his family, and many another for whom we have no room in this story, although the annals of Plymouth honor their deeds and names.

Mrs. Lydia Bradford Cushman's year of widowhood was over, and although she still wore mourning, it was of that gentle and mitigated style which proved vastly becoming to her blond beauty. She was escorted by her cousin, William Bradford, a gay young medical student, afterward of Bristol, R. I., and he had brought his friend, Nathaniel Goodwin. These two, with Abraham Hammatt, Joseph LeBaron, George Watson, Theophilus Cotton, and some other lively bachelors, having got themselves afloat very early to catch the cod for the chowder, besides helping Sam Burgess, of

Saquish, to dig clams for the "bake," now rewarded themselves for their industry by lounging under the trees with the girls, whom they helped or hindered in laying the cloth and spreading the feast, conversing the while in the wise and thoughtful manner characteristic of their time of life both in that day and in this.

It was not long before this merry crowd perceived that Nat Goodwin, the handsome young stranger, had eyes and ears only for Lydia LeBaron, and that she was disposed to unbend in his favor from the rather scornful indifference it had been her wont to display toward the boys who had grown up with her, accepting his somewhat masterful suggestions with a touch of that docility hitherto reserved for her father.

Colonel Winslow, meantime, had linked his arm in that of Lydia's father, and, leading him down the beach, said, "Come, Doctor, you and I will have a stroll, and may be taste a glass of bitters at the Sailor's Joy out here."

For in those days a small public house standing in what is now blue water, between the Beacon and the Square Pier, was supported by mariners who thronged the bay and carried on the now dead-and-buried commerce of Plymouth.

"With pleasure, Colonel," replied the doctor cordially. "This air is a tonic beyond the reach of Jesuits' bark, and even without the bitters will give us appetite for the dainty viviers these dear creatures have provided. High tide, is it not? Not even a ripple on Brown's Island."

"Yes, as calm as a millpond, — as calm as it was on the day I rode across. You've heard of that folly, have n't you?"

“My brother Jim told me something about it, but I was in France at the time.”

“Yes, I remember; but Jim was here, — very much here, poor old chap!”

“It was for a wager you did it, I believe?” suggested the doctor rather sharply, for James LeBaron was recently dead.

“No, not exactly,” replied the colonel, blandly unconscious of everybody’s interests but his own. “I prefer to call it a strategic movement, and so brilliant a one that it shows I was born for a soldier. It was this way: A lot of us fellows, not one over three and twenty, and all full of the Old Harry, agreed to ride down Duxbury Beach to the Gurnet, and have a chowder at Burgess’s, — this man’s father, you know; then we were to ride back and wind up with a supper at the Bunch of Grapes, and the last man in was to pay for the punch. Oh, Lord, what a set of dare-devils we were in those days, though we’re sober enough now! Lothrop ‘as grave as a judge,’ and Warren, and White, and Watson, and ‘Sider Howland: they’re all over here to-day, I vow, and many a stone heavier and many a wrinkle older, — well, well, well. But about the ride. I was mounted on King, that black stallion I had out from England, and the rest rode horses nearly as good, so we got over the ground, I assure you; and what with the fatigue and the heat, and perhaps a drop of aqua vitæ to keep the chowder from hurting us, we all felt a little lazy after dinner, and threw ourselves on the ground under Saquish Tree to smoke and chat awhile before we went home.

“The next thing I knew for certain was the sun setting over Kingston, and blazing full in my eyes.

"I sat up, rubbed my eyes, and looked about me. I was all alone, and the leaves of the old linden were the only tongues that replied to my 'Hullo!'

"I sprang to my feet, stamped a bit, said a strong word or two, and looked harder. No use! I was as much alone as Adam before Eve's arrival. Making my way back to Burgess's, I met the old fellow chuckling so he scarce could stand, which gave me the chance to relieve my mind by another word of a sort, and presently he sobered down enough to tell me that my friends were all gone, but had left their love for me, and they would order the punch to save me the trouble when I came.

"Well, sir, I stood a minute and thought over the position. Those fellows had an hour's start, and they were certain not to linger by the way, for they knew King and they knew me; but an hour is an hour, and if I burst my horse I could not overtake them. As I came to this conclusion, old Eb, who had been watching my face, drawled out:—

" 'Don't see how you 'll do it, young man, 'thout you ride acrost the harbor.'

"I turned and looked at the water. It was dead low water, just the slack before the turn, and the channel at that point is not over half a mile wide from Saquish to the point of the beach, just about where we stand now; then down the beach is three miles, and to the Bunch of Grapes say two to three more, — about six mile in all, while those fellows had fifteen to do.

" 'You're right, Burgess,' said I, 'that's my best course.' And throwing my leg over King I headed him for the point. Lord! you ought to have heard that old man swear! He was a little scared and a little puzzled, and that's the form his feelings took. Any-

way, he swore me into a good humor, so that I rode off laughing, and presently reached the edge of the water. King did n't fancy my idea any more than Burgess did, but I soon persuaded him that I knew best, and once he was off his feet he swam gallantly and strongly.

"The tide turned while we were seaborne, and swept us down a little ; but we weathered it, and struck the beach just about this point, a little south of the Sailor's Joy, — not then built, by the way.

"Once safe on terra firma, I loosened King's girths, moistened my handkerchief with aqua vitæ from my pocket flask and wiped out his mouth, poured the few last drops into my own mouth, and as soon as my horse was breathed, but before he was chilled, I mounted and rode merrily on to town. Half an hour later my party arrived, hot, dusty, and blown, to find me, cool and freshly dressed, compounding a mighty bowl of punch, for which Watson, lagging a little behind the rest, had to pay. Well, well, they were grand times, those ! "

"For Homeric fellows like you," replied the doctor, laughing rather cynically. "And were you the man who rode to Boston and back in one night for a lemon ? "

"No, that was White, Cornelius White, of Marshfield ; brother of Gideon, who married Consider Howland's sister Joanna, the other day."

"Yes, I danced at the wedding."

"I'll be bound you did, Doctor. Well, one night some time after my adventure, a lot of us met to make a night of it at the Bunch of Grapes, and by some mischance the lemons gave out just as we began to get into the thick of the fight.

"If you fellows will swear to sit here till I come

back, I 'll fetch some lemons, if I go to Somewhere for them,' says Corny White; and Bartlett, the landlord, made reply, 'Guess you 'll find 'em a little this side, say as nigh as Boston, but not nearer.'

" 'Well, I 'll try Boston first, anyhow,' says Corny, and in five minutes he was on the road. It was the month of October, and the roads were in first-rate condition, and Corny had a good horse and knew how to ride him; but it was a mighty rash undertaking, a reckless kind of thing, risking his own life and his beast's for nothing better than a lemon! "

" It was an attempt to rival your own exploit, Colonel. Well! "

" Well, he did it, arriving in Boston about two o'clock in the morning; and naturally finding the people abed and the shops closed, he rode down to the tavern in Elm Street, and hammered away with his whip-handle on the door until they got up and served him. Then he made them give his horse a mouthful of gruel and himself a toss of brandy, and was off again, with the net of lemons tied to his saddle. It's a matter of forty mile each way, you know, and he did the whole business in ten hours.

" We all sat round the table, as we had promised, and a very long night it was; but about seven o'clock we heard a horse come stumbling and faltering down the street, and we looked into each other's haggard faces, a little ashamed of ourselves in the morning light.

" The poor beast fell flat the moment the rein was slacked, and never got up again, and the man had to be carried into the house, but — we had the lemons, and made the punch! "

" Hm! Have a pinch of snuff, Colonel."

"I'm obliged to you, Doctor. But all this idle talk is aside from the true business I had to speak of, and as we turn back I must lose no time in opening it.

"I dare say you have already heard that I am on the road to Nova Scotia, there to be under the orders of Governor Lawrence for a time, during the settlement of the boundaries between the French and English provinces, and I know not what exactly ; but I want to get you appointed surgeon of the troops, as your father was before you, only on the other side. Not only have I the profoundest appreciation of your skill and resource, but it will be a pleasure for me to have your companionship, while your knowledge of the French tongue will be of vast benefit to us all. Say you will come, my dear fellow, and your commission is but a matter of days."

The doctor walked thoughtfully on for a short distance, his hands clasped behind him, his head dropped upon his breast ; not doubting his decision, but hesitating a little how to frame it. At last he said : —

"When France ceded Acadia, which you call Nova Scotia, to England, the *habitans* were allowed to take the oath of allegiance to Great Britain with the proviso that they were, under no circumstances, to be called upon to bear arms against France ; is it not so ?"

"Certainly. They are called the French Neutrals to-day."

"Well, Colonel Winslow, I also am a French Neutral."

And the doctor faced his companion with a proud smile upon his lips, while a certain indefinable air of *ancienne noblesse* crept, quite unconsciously to himself, over and through the entire man.

Winslow, descendant of the haughtiest of the Pilgrims, recognized the change, and appreciated it.

"Your father's blood is warm in your veins," said he quietly.

"Yes, and it will not fight against his native land. We do not say these things aloud, Winslow, but I am a man without a home. When I was in France, the voices of the children prattling their native tongue thrilled me with delight, for so my father used to speak to me, an infant on his knee. And yet, I could not stay in France; the air, so laden with the decay of a corrupt monarchy, was like that of a sick-room where they burn pastilles to cover loathsome odors. I longed for the untainted breath of Plymouth woods and shore; yesterday again, when yonder Bordeaux trader came in, I went down on the wharf and spent an hour in listening to her sailors swearing in French. Take a pinch of snuff, Colonel."

"I see, I see," said Winslow gently, but not joining in the other's bitter laugh.

"In three generations, however," pursued LeBaron, as the two men once more approached the merry camping-ground, "one may expect a real transformation of most race-marks. My children are, or should be, English colonists, if that is our nationality" —

"Nay, we are Englishmen," interposed Winslow proudly.

"Who never breathed English air," was the quiet reply. "Oh well, oh well, Winslow, for all our pride of free-will we neither make nor mar the world's destiny. A hundred years from to-day our great grandchildren will laugh at our blind ignorance, and God only knows of what nationality they will call themselves. Meantime" — and with a gesture of his handsome hand the doctor seemed to sweep the late conversation airily be-

hind him, — “meantime, you ask me to go with you to Canada, and I reply with the man in Holy Writ, ‘I marry a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’”

“You!”

“I.”

“And the lady, may I ask?”

For reply, the doctor, stepping within the embowered lawn on whose limit they had paused, took a charming seek-no-further apple from a basket standing near, and, doffing his hat, offered it to the widow Cushman, saying softly, —

“For the fairest!”

CHAPTER IX.

QUASHO'S CALABASH.

IT was a golden September day, and some of the happiest inhabitants of Plymouth lay or crouched in the morning sunshine upon the gallery, or as they called it, the stoop, which ran across the back of Doctor LeBaron's house, connecting two little additions recently made to the main body. One of these additions, known as Prince's kitchen, was, with the bedrooms over it, the abiding place of the negro servants when not on duty, and the other was a scullery and wash-house; the wide gallery connecting these, and also giving access to the main kitchen, was protected from the north, and, lying exposed to the east with a trend toward the south, was a deliciously warm and sunny spot.

One of the principal duties of the mistress of the house had always been to guard this stoop from the poultry and the negroes, who both made constant if furtive efforts to roost there; but now, alas, the house had no mistress, for David Bradford's daughter, pretty, fair-haired widow Cushman, had gone to join that other "Lydia, wife of Doctor Lazarus LeBaron," upon Burying Hill, and lay close by her side, in mute submission to the law that death makes all men comrades, be their lives never so opposed.

And yet, fancy at the midnight hour those two Lydias standing, each a misty slender figure, at her own head-

stone, and gazing each upon the other through the fog-laden moonlight! Would Lydia Bartlett carry Lydia Bradford to creep with her into the doctor's study, that room denied to both in life, and would she lay a ghostly finger upon the square of crimson harrateen and tell its story with a flickering smile?

At least we are sure that this first Lydia needed not to reproach the second with a stepmother's harshness to her children, for she had been gentleness and self-denial personified, and the victim rather than the oppressor of Lydia LeBaron, until the latter married Nathaniel Goodwin and left her father's house. Then roguish Mary married William Bradford, and Hannah was but now the bride of Benjamin Goodwin, brother to Lydia's husband; and Doctor LeBaron had, as trustee of his stepson Elkanah Cushman, sold the house on the corner of the Great Gutter to Ben and Hannah, giving as his whimsical reason that Pegasus had acquired such a habit of stopping there that it was best to have one of the family settled in the house.

So Teresa remained alone of her mother's daughters, and played with somewhat ludicrous effect the part of matron to her half-sister Elizabeth, commonly called Bess, a gentle maid of sixteen, and to little Priscilla and Margaret.

To these four girls, must be added four boys, Isaac, Lemuel, Francis, and William, ranging in age from nine to eighteen, the torment and the delight, the terror and the boast, of old Pompey and Phyllis, who had become virtually the heads of the house, although a lady, called Aunt Nancy by everybody in town, had been a member of the family ever since the late Mistress LeBaron's death, and was nominally housekeeper and duenna.

After this long preamble we will return to the gallery, whose happy occupants were none other than the negroes, who, knowing that even Aunt Nancy was out, and the doctor on his rounds, sprawled in the sunshine, happily oblivious of any other need or duties. Pompey, gray-haired and imperious, sat upon the top step, a corn-cob pipe in his mouth, a mug of cider at his right hand; his son Pompey, a fellow of fifteen or so, lay flat upon his stomach in the scorching sun, and as the marrow fried in his bones drummed his toes upon the hot boards in delicious content. Phyllis, his mother, disposed her amplitude in a splint-bottomed low rocking-chair, and also smoked. Prince and Quasho, fine hearty fellows in the prime of life, lounged upon the steps at Pompey's feet, Prince smoking, and Quasho eating apples as usual, and throwing the cores to the ducks and hens who waddled, quacked, and cackled around his feet.

"Mis'able kind o' work, dis heavin' up yer anchor an' gittin' under way ebery odder minute," remarked Prince, who had been to the Banks on his master's account in the last season.

"Don' know 'bout ebery odder minute," objected Quasho. "I ain't nebber moved but once in *my* life, an' dat was from Afriky here."

"Doos you remember w'en you come, unc' Quash?" asked young Pompey, raising his head like a turtle.

"W'y, ain't you nebber heerd o' dat?" exclaimed Phyllis, looking fondly upon her offspring. "Law-d bless de chile, Quash, tell him all 'bout it."

"Spec's he's heerd it heap o' times a'ready," replied Quasho, rolling his eyes lazily toward the boy. "But dere's plenty o' folks jis like dem yer ducks: yer kin jis heave water ober 'em all day, and nebber wet dey skin."

"Go 'long, Quash! Tell de chile all 'bout it 'fore Miss Nancy gets home."

"Dunno w'at Miss Nancy's got ter say 'bout it," replied Quasho superbly. "She was a heap too old to know nuffin w'en I come here. Well, boy, it wuz jus dis way: it was froo stoppin to play w'en I was sent on an ar'nt dat I came in de mis'able fix w'at you sees me in now."

"Dunno as you's so awful mis'able, unc' Quash," remarked Pomp with a grin, but Quash gravely shook his head.

"Dere's lots o' mis'ry chil'en don' know nuffin 'bout; dey's like young b'ars wid all dere troubles ahead of 'em."

"Dat's so, nigger!" sighed Prince, who was consumed with an unrequited passion for Nanny, Lawyer Hovey's servant.

"Yes, Pomp, ef I'd a minded my mammy, an' fotched that ar cal'bash o' water spry, you would n' neber ben 'quainted wid me," resumed Quasho dolefully. "Mos' likely I'd 'a ben eat up fore now, fer dat's de way mas' Doctor sez our folks gits der libbin ter home, an' dat's w'y we'd ought ter be so t'ankful to be fotched here, an' wuk for our vittles. Min' you be t'ankful all yer life long, Pomp."

"But, unc' Quash, I wa' n't born in dat yer place w'ere dey eats folks," retorted Pomp, who knew how to read, and cipher almost as well as his young masters.

"Hm — well, *I was*, boy," replied Quash, a little disconcerted, — "I was; an' I 'member's though it was yes'day how my mammy gib me big cal'bash one day, an' tole me run lickety split down to de spring an' fill it, 'cause she in awful hurry."

"Tell how she talk nigger talk, Quash," suggested Phyllis, with a jovial chuckle.

"Mos' forgotten how dat goes, but somefin like dis yer," and Quasho gave utterance to a series of uncouth sounds, prominent among which was his own name.

"I heern yer say 'Quasho'!" exclaimed Pomp, sitting upright in his excitement.

"Yes, boy, dat was my name, an' I kep' it; wait till I tell yer how. W'en I got down to de spring, fus' t'ing I do was ter take a drink o' water, an' de nex' t'ing was ter lay flat on my back an' stick my toes in der water, an' paddle em up an' down same as any odder pickaninny 'd do; fer I was a leetly bit ob a chile,—leetler dan Miss Marg'et, heap leetler. Lord, niggers, seems dough I see dat spring dis minute, wid de cocoapalms a-stan'in' up so still an' gran', an' de sky so blue an' full o' sunshine, an' de hot air jis flickerin' up an' down ober de sand outside de grove, an' de pooty pooty lil' brook a-runnin' 'way from de spring an' gittin' los' outside. Seems as dough I see it now — Lordy!"

"Pore ole mammy!" said Phyllis, wiping away a ready tear with one end of her turban bow.

"Yes, I s'pose she felt bad — jes' lil' while; but pore folks don' keer long," and Quasho shook his head, with the gloomy cynicism of an habitually merry fellow.

"W'y, wot happened nex'?" demanded Pomp, who knew well enough, but liked to hear the story.

"W'y, boy, de nex' t'ing, w'ile I lay dere a-paddlin' my feet an' starin' up at dem cocoanuts agin de blue sky, I heern a leetly rustle in de bushes ahint me, an' somefin — a man's hat, I reckon — was flopped inter my face, an' 'fore I'd got bref enough back to holler, a great big han' stopped up my mouf an' nose, an' some-

buddy 'nother was totin' me off from de bushes fas' as a hoss kin trot. 'T was one o' dem slave-dealers, yer see, an' I nebber knew noffin more till I was board ship boun' fer Merikey.

"Pore ole mammy! I alluz keep a-cunjurin' up how she looked w'en she foun' dat cal'bash on de groun' an' de marks o' white man's shoes in de san'. Well, boy, I don' rightly know how I came down yere, but de fust I 'member 'bout Plymouf is a-settin' on a leetly creepy-stool in de chimbly corner inside yere, an' maum Phyllis a-rubbin my han's, rubbin' em good" —

"Lors, yis, honey, an' so I did," cried Phyllis, laughing until her fat sides shook, and rocking herself backward and forward in the old splint chair, which creaked and groaned as if it were laughing too.

"De frozenes' lilly nigger eber I see, — jis done come offen de schooner from Bos'n, an' mos' 'bout dead wid cole, an' scare, an' mammy-sickness!"

"Lawd, yes!" ejaculated old Pompey solemnly. "Don' pear's dough 't was de same nigger nohow."

"Den maum Phyllis git me good bowl o' hasty pud'n an' milk, an' a piece o' ginger cake, an' a doughnut, an I donno as I's ben hungry, not reel downright hungry, sence, — dey was so fill'n. Nex ting was, mas'r Doctor a-tryin' an' a-contrivin' to git holt o' my name, an w'en I see wot he wanted I tole him Quasho Quando, for dat waz wat mammy sez w'en she gib me dat cal'bash to go an' fetch some water, an' I s'pose it wuz my name; so I sez Quasho Quando ebery time mas'r Doctor spoke; but ebery time he'd shake his head kind o' solemn an' say, 'No, boy, you name is Jul'us Cæsar. Now wot you name?' An' I'd say Quasho Quando. Den he gib me lilly tap side de head, an' say berry solemn an'

stric', 'Say Jul'us Cæsar, boy!' an' I'd say 'Quasho Quando, mas'r,' 'cause Phyllis had teached me say Mas'r an' Mist'ss. Well, pore ole mas'r he contrive an' he conjur' ebery sort ob a way fer to make me outen Quashy an' inter Jul'us, but 't wa'n't a mite o' use. He sen' me ter bed widouten supper, an' he lick me some, — drefful kin' o' sof'ly, dough, an' he show me an ole sojer hat wid feath's into it dat he 'd gib me, an' Lord sake I couldn' begin fer to tell all de ways he wucked an' wucked, an' one way wa'n't no better dan t'oder, an' at las' he gib in, an' Quasho Quando" —

"That's it, Quash, that's the way you always tell it," broke in a merry voice, as two little girls appeared at the door, followed by a tall slender maiden, whose dark eyes and hair, and complexion rich and colorless as a magnolia blossom, were the reproduction of some forgotten strain in the LeBaron blood.

"Golly, missy, should n' scare a pore nig' dat way!" exclaimed Quash, lumbering to his feet, as did all the rest, although Teresa had not opened her lips, and the interruption had come from merry little Margaret, who with Priscilla, her grave and silent sister, leaned forward out of the black background of the kitchen like a couple of rosebuds grouped with a stately lily.

"It is after eleven, Phyllis," said Teresa, in a voice harmonizing with her complexion; but at that moment the sound of clattering hoofs and whirling wheels, mingled with shrieks, exclamations, and shouts, arose upon the sultry summer air in strange discordance with the hour and scene.

The negroes dashed around the corner of the house and out into the street, while Teresa and her little sisters ran hastily to the front to look through the great bow-window filling one end of the keeping-room.

CHAPTER X.

MOTHER CREWE AT WORK ; AND HOW TO MAKE CHEESE- CAKES.

PROBABLY the LeBaron boys were no worse than other boys, but they managed to be more conspicuous in their naughtiness than their neighbors ; so that when any notorious piece of mischief, such as cutting the rope of the church bell, putting pins in the schoolmaster's chair, or laying trains of gunpowder to explode under the feet of the tithingman as he pursued Sunday loiterers down some alley, or round some corner, came to the public notice, everybody asked : —

“ Was it Frank, or Lem, or Bill ? ”

A few years earlier, they had said, “ Bart or Isaac, — which was it ? ” But now, Bartlett was distinguishing himself at Harvard, where some stories, too amusing to print, still linger around his memory ; and Isaac, having donned the *toga virilis*, and begun to study with his father, as had his two step-brothers, Lazarus and Joseph, felt in a manner compelled to lay aside childish things, and devote his sparkling sense of fun to the amusement of the young ladies, especially Martha Howland, whose society he much frequented. But Francis, Lemuel, and William, aged respectively thirteen, eleven, and nine, had come under no obligations as yet, except to extract the maximum of fun from the minimum of penalty, and devoted all their leisure time to a process

discovered long before their day, although not until long after did it become picturesquely known as "painting the town red."

So when Josiah Cook, wandering home one day about noon, had to stumble very fast out of the road to escape a horse attached to a light carriage, and with a thrifty burdock plant attached to him, which he kept in place by the pressure of his own tail, the man exclaimed wrathfully, — "Them LeBaron boys!" and stood staring after the runaway, while the horse, dashing along School Street and through Town Square, turned the sharp corner into Main Street just as a little boy set out to cross it, and, hearing the horse, faltered, turned back, stood still, and as he wavered was overtaken by swift destruction, for the horse, swerving as he saw him, upset the carriage, fell down himself, and crushed the child beneath the wheel, while the flying hoofs threatened a yet more terrible catastrophe.

"Save him! oh, somebody save my little brother!" screamed a girl's voice, and a slender, ill-clad figure darted across the street and into the midst of that plunging disaster, but was captured and held back by the strong arm of a young man who at sound of danger had rushed out from the Bunch of Grapes hard at hand.

"Here, somebody! Bear a hand and hold this girl!" shouted he; and Isaac LeBaron springing forward, caught the struggling figure, while the first comer, raising the wheel by a prodigious exertion held it up with one hand and managed to drag the child out with the other.

"Cut that horse free, some of you, can't you?" roared he, as at the last moment a hoof caught him upon the leg and nearly broke it; but still he clung to his helpless burden, and with free use of his elbows ex-

tricated himself from the crowd already gathered, and quite able to attend to the horse.

“Take the child into the Bunch of Grapes !”

“No, carry him right home !”

“Bring him into my house, and come you too, Samson.”

At sound of this last voice, everybody looked around with an air of relief ; for Doctor LeBaron stood next to Providence in the minds of many a one there, and now that he had joined the group all seemed ready to leave the responsibility with him.

“This way, Samson, and you too, Yetmercy,” ordered he briefly, leading the way to a little surgery, added in the later years to the northwestern corner of his house.

Shutting and bolting the door in face of all but the two he had bidden, the doctor laid the child upon a couch, and hastily examined his hurts, the poor little fellow moaning faintly, but remaining unconscious.

“Bad — hm — Yetmercy, go round to my kitchen and tell Phyllis to come here with some hot water and towels — pshaw, child, you ’re fit for nothing ! Sim, you go — you ’ll find the kitchen, and call the biggest negro woman Phyllis — tell her hot water and towels !”

“Yes, sir,” and Simeon Samson hastened away upon his errand, while Yetmercy, weak and emotional as Molly Peach, her mother, sat upon the floor and wept unrestrainedly.

The doctor, busy over his patient, glanced compassionately at her from time to time, and finally asked : —

“Which one is this, Yetmercy ? What ’s his name, and how old ?”

“Ich-a-bod, — he ’s sev-seven !” sobbed the girl.

"Well, don't you care anything about Ichabod, nor about your mother?"

"Yes, sir, I c-c-care — oh — oh" —

"If you cared any way worth having, you'd try to do something for the boy, instead of sitting there and howling. I want somebody to help me get off these clothes, and there's nobody but you, and you're no use, none at all."

"I'll try, sir, but mother says I'm awful — er — er — tender-hearted," and Yetmercy, rising, wiped her eyes, smoothed her hair with trembling fingers, and meekly stood ready to obey the directions of the doctor, who rewarded her with a pleasant smile, and "That's right, my lass! now take hold of this coat and draw it gently out as I raise him — there, now!"

"Here we are, Doctor,— Phyllis, and hot water, and swabs, and a young fellow" —

"Oh, it's you, Isaac. Well, come in and make yourself useful. Sit you down, Samson, and I'll look at that leg presently."

Poor little Ichabod! The glory of life had indeed departed from his existence, for, besides a broken hip, there was an injury to the spine, for which the best hope was that it might soon be fatal.

"He'll never leave his bed again until he is carried from it to Burying Hill," said the doctor in Samson's ear, as he fingered and looked at the cut upon the young man's leg. "No bones broken here, but you'll not get to the main-truck very easily for some weeks. Stay and have some dinner with us, Samson. I want to hear about your voyage."

"Thank you, sir, I'll be proud to," replied Samson cordially as the vision of a sweet pale face and great

dark eyes, just seen in the depths of the hall during his late errand, flashed upon his memory.

"Now, Isaac, that stretcher, and get Prince and Quash round to carry it. You and I will go along too, and see that it moves steadily."

"Dinner's jes ready, mas'r," interposed Phyllis, more respectfully than she ever spoke to any one else, "an' de chile kin lay here an' me to take keer of him widout hurtin' nobuddy fer an' hour er so."

"Very well, and perhaps better, for you can go home, Yetmercy, and have a bed ready downstairs, and get your mother somewhat prepared before we reach there. Now show yourself a brave little woman, and remember that's the way to let us know you really care for your little brother."

So Yetmercy, her great blue eyes swimming in tears, although she managed to restrain her sobs, set out for home, while Isaac hastily followed her for a few steps, and then turned back to his dinner.

In spite of Phyllis's morning lounge this meal proved an admirable one, consisting of a great piece of *à-la-mode* beef, sweet potatoes, and turnips, cauliflower enveloped in a fair mantle of cream sauce, and pickles both of native and West Indian production.

Following this was a rice *Florinda*, a dish of cheese-cakes, and fruit in a curiously wrought basket of Delft ware.

And just in passing let me copy for you, from Lydia LeBaron's manuscript recipe-book, the rule by which those cheese-cakes were made; for it solves the question most of us modern weaklings have asked ourselves as to the meaning of the name as applied to the vapid cates passing among us for cheese-cakes.

TO MAKE CHEESE-CAKES.

Take a quart of milk, and boyle it. Beat six Eggs and pore in while it boyles. Then take it off the fyre, and let it stand till its a tender Curd. Then strayne it thro a sive, put in a quarter of a pound of Butter, gill of Wine, two spoonfulls of Rosewater, mace beat fine. Strow in some Currants and sweeten it to your tast. Bake them in small pate-pans with puff past round them. None over the Top.

And so in the "tender Curd" we have the idea of *cheese*, now forgotten.

Simeon Samson thought them as delicious as the young gentleman in "The Arabian Nights" did the cream tarts, for his host, in offering them, said:—

"Have one of Tressy's cheese-cakes. She's a famous hand at them, 'most as good as her sister Lyddy. You're sailing for Lyddy's husband now, are n't you?"

"Yes, sir. I'm to command Goodwin & Warren's brigantine, Lydia, next voyage," replied the sailor, stealing a look at Teresa to see if she heard of his promotion.

"Yes. Nat named her for his wife and daughter. Lyddy's a favorite name in our family; I wived two of them. Now, then, Quash, clear away these things and serve the coffee, for I'm in a hurry to get up to Ring's. Tressy, let us have the cauliflower cups in honor of Captain Samson."

"Not captain yet, Doctor."

"Pshaw, boy! take all the credit you can get, if only for what you mean to do. You may never live to do it, you know."

"If you will excuse me, father," said the dulcet voice Samson had as yet scarce heard, "I will fetch the cauliflower cups myself, since Phyllis is not at hand."

"As you like, daughter. A careful little housekeeper, you see, Captain."

"Nothing becomes a young gentlewoman more, to my mind," replied Samson ardently, and the doctor laughed, well pleased, while Teresa, a slight color showing through her creamy pallor, left the room, and presently returned, preceded by young Pomp, who opened and closed the doors while she carefully carried a wonderful carved tortoise-shell tray filled with cups, saucers, "sugar-dish" and slop-basin of some forgotten but most precious pottery, each piece shaped with Dutch patience and loving zeal into the semblance of a half-opened cauliflower, apotheosis to the artist's mind, no doubt, of his beloved cabbage.

Placing these upon the table, Teresa quietly seated herself behind them, and poured for the guest a cup of some nectar whose nature he could not have described, until his host, pushing a little decanter toward him, said : —

"Lace your coffee with a drop of old Cognac, Captain. 'T is a fashion I learned in Paris, and have never forgot. And for that matter, 't is rather a foreign fashion to take coffee after dinner, but I like it, and find it a good stomachic. What think you?"

"'T is the best I ever tasted," replied Samson, gulping down the coffee so hot that it brought tears to his eyes, and never seeing the decanter of Cognac. Again the doctor's eyes twinkled, and pushing back his chair he said : —

"Well, I must be off. Come along, Isaac. Samson,

don't hurry yourself, especially as you are wounded. Tarry where you are for a while, and Teresa will give you a tune on her spinet, or, if you like it better, play you a game of draughts or backgammon. I leave him in your charge, Tressy."

CHAPTER XI.

MOTHER CREWE IS PLEASED.

IN a wretched hovel upon the Carver road lived and died the family of Ansel Ring and his wife Molly, consisting, besides the parents, of three girls with one brother older, and one, poor little Ichabod, younger than themselves. Ansel, not much daunted at first by mother Crewe's curse, had pursued his seafaring life, and as he was a strong, sober, and able-bodied seaman had no trouble in getting employment from one or other of the firms of shipping-merchants of Plymouth, then carrying on an active commerce with all parts of the world.

But his fellow-sailors were also many of them his fellow-townsmen, and all the world knows how the pressure of immensity upon a sailor's mind generally results in superstition, so that one scarcely wonders that, after two or three fatal mishaps upon the vessels rating Ansel Ring as A1 seaman, some of the other Plymouth men muttered the story of the curse to those who had not heard it, and others spoke menacingly of Jonahs who should be heaved overboard ; and the mates, gathering the cause of moody looks and dark hints, carried them to the captains, who laughed grimly and swore contemptuously at such notions, but next voyage did not accept Ring's somewhat hang-dog offer of his services.

At last came a day, in the March before this Septem-

ber, when the Petrel, a coasting schooner of the Hedges, flew round the Gurnet, driven before a furious north-east gale, and, waiting for the tide, anchored off Dick's flat. No sooner was this done than Ansel Ring, coming to the captain, demanded rather than requested the use of a boat to set himself ashore upon the beach ; for, as he passionately declared, he was afraid of his shipmates, and could no longer bear the "marooning" they were practicing upon him.

"They say mother Crewe has sent this gale to wreck the hooker here in port, and they swear if our anchor begins to drag they'll take and heave me overboard first thing. I've stood all I'm going to stand, and this is the last time you'll ever see me afloat, if I starve for it. Let me have the dingy, Cap'n, and I'll leave her safe on the beach yander ; or if you don't, I'll tumble overboard and make an end of it some way."

The captain opened his mouth to refuse and threaten confinement in irons, but catching the desperate and hunted look upon the man's face suddenly changed his mind, and said almost gently : —

"Do as you see fit, Ring, but neither the dingy nor any other boat can live in that surf. Better stick it out, man."

"Thank y', sir," replied Ring, the hunted look softening at the tone of human sympathy ; but it came too late, and after a moment's hesitation he turned away, and all unaided began to lower the little boat. The captain also hesitated for a moment, then turned and went into his cabin, perhaps saying to himself, —

"Am I my brother's keeper?"

Well, the dingy could not live in the fury of the surf breaking thunderously upon Beach Point, and as the

men who had hounded him to his death looked on, they saw the frail craft crushed like an eggshell, and their comrade snatched out and made the plaything of that monster, whose voice drowned his parting cry, if indeed he uttered any. Back and forward, over and over, up and down, that white Death tossed its prey, until, tired of the sport, it flung the poor battered, broken, and oh, so ghastly a plaything, up upon the beach, the stump of an oar still grasped in its hand, and the wreck of the dingy strewed beside it, as if in bitter gibe at man's attempt to ride in safety over that angry sea.

Very silently, when the storm was over, those seamen brought the body of their Jonah to the town, and to the poor home where his wife waited for him. Upon the threshold they met mother Crewe, who, somehow, nobody ever knew how, had heard the evil tidings before any one else in town, and hastened to bring them to Molly Ring.

That day was six months gone by, and now, as the little procession bringing poor Ichabod to his home approached the house, it was confronted by the ominous figure of the old woman suddenly rising from the doorstep, where she had awaited its coming.

"Molly! Molly Peach!" croaked she, striking her staff upon the stone, "come out and welcome your child. The foundations of the cursed city were laid in the blood of the firstborn, and the posts were set up in the bones of the youngest, and so it shall be, and so it is, with you!"

Isaac LeBaron, who had gone a little in advance of the litter, which his father followed on horseback, heard the words, and although not fully understanding them read their intent upon the white, scared face of Yet-

mercy, who stood in the doorway, and he impetuously sprang forth as her champion.

"Hold your tongue, mother Crewe!" cried he, putting out a hand to remove her from the path. "What a wicked old woman you are, to be glad of other folk's mishaps! Out of the way, I say!"

"Have a care, Master Isaac! Have a care! Touch me with just the point of a finger, and I'll wither your arm to the shoulder!" And the crone fixed upon the young man's face a look blazing with the fires of insanity, or of demoniacal possession, as folk then said, and somewhat in that look struck through his hot young blood like the blast from an iceberg. Quite involuntarily he shrank back, and the old woman laughed as she strode past.

"Yes, have a care, boy, have a care! She has blue eyes and pink cheeks, and so had her mother before her, but she is under the curse, and it's catching, catching as small-pox. Have a care, Isaac LeBaron, have a care!" And as she rapidly climbed the hill beyond the cabin, her mocking laugh came back, mingled with the croak of a pair of crows who seemed to accompany her.

"What was that old witch saying, Isaac?" asked his father, dismounting. "But never mind now. Is the bed all ready, Yetmercy?"

"Yes, sir, but poor mother, she's fallen down on it. She felt bad enough, and then mother Crewe came and just finished her up."

"That woman!" muttered the doctor, hastening into the house, followed by the girl.

Not many hours later a dead baby was born, the last of Ansel Ring's doomed children, and for a while it seemed as if his mother would follow him; but, with

perhaps unfortunate skill, Doctor LeBaron held her to life, and in a few days pronounced her safe, and made over the care of her convalescence, and of Ichabod's lingering death-in-life, to Isaac, who largely inherited the family skill in chirurgery, as the old folk still called the healing art.

And Yetmercy, caring both for the querulous mother and the suffering brother, who slowly lapsed from bad to worse, still found her labors lightened and her heart cheered marvelously by the visits of the young doctor, and the brief moments through which he lingered after the visits were over.

Mother Crewe, who in some obscure fashion had removed from Plympton to Plymouth, and gained possession of a little hut upon the edge of Carver woods, perhaps to be near enough to overlook the working of her curse, watched the progress of this intimacy; sometimes listening under the windows as the evenings grew long and misty, sometimes hovering among the hillside thickets above the house, sometimes suddenly appearing in the path of the young couple, as Yetmercy strolled down the road, hearing the doctor's last words, and asking some simple question over and over, just to postpone the good-by.

At these times the old woman never spoke, in fact rather avoided giving the opportunity for speech, but the baleful light of those cavernous eyes, and the malignant glee of the half-heard laugh floating back when she had passed, so chilled the simple girl's blood that more than once she clung crying to the arm of her companion, who, in the pride of his young manhood, promised to shield her from all harm and all enemies.

Had Doctor Lazarus LeBaron been as vigilant in this

matter as mother Crewe, much woe might have been averted from his house, but two important matters at this time distracted his attention.

The first was, that Nathaniel Goodwin, husband of Lydia, having made a good deal of money in the course of commerce, became able, as he always had been willing, to give his wife a home worthy of what they both agreed were her merits, and suggesting the idea to his father-in-law received the unexpected answer : —

“Give her this, if you like.”

“What, your own house, Doctor?”

“Yes. I’m tired of it. Three Lyddys have gone out of it, and left it too empty. I sha’n’t marry again, and — well, in point of fact, Nat, the house I’m building there on Cole’s Hill, over the cellar of the old Cotton parsonage, is where I mean to live.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Nat, a good deal surprised; for it had been the doctor’s whim to keep his intentions strictly to himself, and everybody, even Return Waite, of whom he bought the old Cotton parsonage, supposed that the new house going up on its site would be sold or leased.

So Lydia Goodwin came back to reign in the house where she had reigned as Lydia LeBaron, and the doctor, with his four remaining daughters and the four sons of his second marriage, went to live on Cole’s Hill, next to Giles Rickard, whom the doctor quietly divided from himself by an open way, still called LeBaron’s Alley. Building this house at his leisure and after his own plans, the doctor’s first care was to provide himself with a study the exact counterpart of the old one; and the night before the general Hegira, he packed all the contents of that mysterious chamber with his own

hands, allowing Quasho to help him carry the heavy furniture downstairs and place it in the cart at the door. Before morning, all was duly arranged in the new room precisely as it had been in the old, the lock removed from the one door to the other, and the same key turned and deposited safely in the pocket of the doctor's smallclothes.

"Now, Quasho Quando," said the doctor, as master and man came out of the new house and walked beside the cart toward their old home, "you are never, never, mind you, to your dying day, to tell any one what you and I have been about to-night. If you do, I shall be sure to know it, and that flogging promised you for so many years will come at last."

"Ain't mite 'fraid dat floggin'," replied Quasho confidently, — "mas'r an I 's got too ole an' 'spectable for any sech doin's: but," with a sudden change of voice, "reck'n mas'r kin trust me widout any dat kin' o' talk."

The doctor stopped and held out his hand in the dim starlight.

"Quash," said he, "I beg your pardon."

"Oh, Lord, mas'r, don't — don't ye, now," quavered the poor fellow, and off came his old hat, and down on his knees he went in the dust to kiss the hand which had never once been seriously raised against him.

"Good-night, boy," was all the doctor said, as he softly let himself into the house, but master and man were closer friends from that night.

The second cause detaining the doctor from proper supervision of his assistant was something more tragic than this episode.

One of the coasting schooners always dodging in and out of Plymouth, one day left a sick sailor ashore, and

Doctor LeBaron, when called to consider his case, looked very blank over it, and presently had to confide to his brother selectmen that here was another case of small-pox, a scourge under which Plymouth had already suffered grievously, and which was the more to be dreaded that most men in that day considered it useless to contend against it, while many thought it impious to try.

Doctor Zabdiel Boylston, of Boston, had some years before this time attempted to introduce the practice of inoculation, a movement of science brought by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu from the East to England, where she herself practiced it upon as many persons as would submit.

But Lady Mary was a woman, and was not a Puritan, and Boston folk would none of her; in fact, so ill did they receive Doctor Boylston's attempt to imitate her practice that they decided hanging was the best remedy for such unnatural propensities, and would probably have carried out their decision in his case, had not the Reverend Cotton Mather, a man not ordinarily erring upon the side of mercy, stood forth in his defense, and offered himself and all his family as subjects for the new treatment.

Now Doctor Lazarus LeBaron was a friend of Doctor Boylston's and often rode or sailed to Boston to confer with him. He did so several times during the inoculation excitement, and was well inclined to adopt it; but at the first suggestion of such a thing in his native town, he perceived that the time was not yet ripe for it. In fact, Parson Leonard scrupled not to say that much learning had made the doctor mad, and had opened the door for a malignant spirit to enter in, and

fill his mind with homicidal projects; and in a private interview, the good man solemnly recited a form of exorcism over the head of his deluded brother, and formally consigned to his proper abode the fiend who was tempting him to blasphemous rebellion against the fore-ordained chastisements of the Almighty.¹

Whether the fiend went whither he was sent we cannot tell, but certainly the doctor said nothing more about inoculation for a good many years, one reason being that the small-pox capriciously deserted Plymouth as suddenly as it had appeared. But the arrival of this sick sailor, and the anxiety as to what might be the sequel of the affair, brought back to the doctor's mind all his old doubts and scruples about neglecting what might be, and indeed probably was, a powerful means of defense against this terrible foe.

The sick man, already delirious, was carried by night to a lonely cabin on the edge of the woods in Oberry, a by-corner of the town, and great wages were offered by the selectmen to any woman who would undertake to care for him. The next day, the doctor, going with many precautions to visit his patient, found mother Crewe sitting beside him.

"You!" exclaimed he, in a voice of unconcealed dismay.

"Me, sure enough," croaked the hag, with her raven laugh. "And why not? I'm as good a nuss as most, ain't I? Was n't my gal nussed well? And I've had the small-pox as thorough as a woman could have it and live. Why not me?"

"Well, if you do your duty by this poor fellow, and keep away from everybody else," replied the doctor,

¹ A fact.

reluctantly ; and hurriedly making his examination and leaving some medicines, with an injunction to keep the patient warmly covered, and not to allow a breath of fresh air to reach him, he took his leave, returning, not to the bosom of his family, but to the study, where he lived in strict seclusion until this case should be decided.

“And so soon as it is,” said the doctor aloud, as he paced his lonely room up and down, “I will go to Boston, see Boylston, and get some of the virus he speaks of gathering now from kine ; he will teach me how to apply it, and if no one else in Plymouth is safe my children shall be.”

The sound of horse’s feet halting before his house led him to the window.

A handsome if somewhat masculine girl was dismounting at the door.

“Yes, Tressy shall be safe if I can make her so,” said the doctor, staring absently at the visitor, whom he did not know.

And Lachesis smiled at Clotho, as the one twisted in her black thread and the other span it.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE.

COULD Doctor LeBaron, as he looked moodily from his study window upon the horse and rider stopping at his door, have known the message and foreseen the result of that visit, his calm indifference might well have changed to a passion of grief and dismay.

And yet the steed was a goodly one, not black, but cheerful sorrel, and the rider was young and comely, albeit somewhat of the Judith, or Jael, or Deborah style of beauty; indeed, her name was Deborah, and she looked it more fairly than most of us do our names; a fine figure, too, tall and well set up, with a round supple waist and flat back, and large well-shapen hands, whose grasp upon the rein no sensible horse would ever try to dispute.

Looking about her a little, this fair Amazon presently espied a kinky head, and pair of beady eyes surveying her around the corner of the house, and promptly hailed them.

“Here, boy! I want you.”

“Yes, mist’ss;” and young Pompey, adding a pleasing grin to his other attractions, sauntered out of the alley where he had hid for purposes of his own.

“Is Mistress Teresa LeBaron at home?”

“Yes, mist’ss, Mis’ Tressy jus’ done gone upsta’rs.”

“Well, take my horse and open the front door, and tell her that a gentlewoman craves to speak with her.”

"Shorely, mist'ss. Walk right in, dis a way, an' set down. I'll take the hoss roun', an' send word to Mis' Tressy."

Having established the visitor in the parlor and the horse in the shed, young Pompey strolled into the kitchen, to assuage that thirst for information which was one of his leading characteristics.

"S'pose you done tole Mis' Tressy 'bout de lady dat come fer ter see her, mammy?" began he.

"Uncle Quash tole her," replied Phyllis with brevity, as she deftly shoveled her pies into the brick oven, whose heat she had just tested by sprinkling some flour upon the bottom.

"An' how d'y' call her, unc' Quash?"

"How does I call her uncle Quash! W'y, I does n' call her any such ting. Dat my name, not hern."

"Well, w'at *is* her name, den?"

"Ah! W'y did n' yer ask dat honest in de fus' place, boy? Alluz be hones', 'cause dat's de bes' policy. Now ef you 'd 'a' asked honest, mabbe I'd 'a' told yer" —

"No, you would n'. I know you better," retorted young Pomp, in so aggrieved a tone that his mother interposed.

"Go 'long, now, Quash! W'at for's you alluz plaguin' dat young one? W'at's de young mist'ss name, anyhow?"

"W'y, aun' Phyllis, I'd tell yer in a minit, if I knowed it, but I don'; all she said w'en I went in de parlor was, 'Please tell Mistress Teresa LeBaron that a gentlewoman would like to speak with her.'"

"Jes' wat she said to me," remarked young Pomp.

"Mabbe 't was Mist'ss Hetty Lord from Kingston,"

suggested Prince, who had just come in upon an errand from Mistress Lydia Goodwin, whose servant he now was.

"Mist'ss Hetty Lord!" echoed Quash meditatively. "Well, mabbe; 't ain't to be 'spected a pore sinful nigger like me will know any of de Lord's fam'ly by sight, but I's mighty glad ef He's sent to fotch one of mas'r's gals, for I swear de debble 'll git all de boys."

"Go long wid yer, boy!" exclaimed Phyllis, in buxom wrath. "'Tis easy 'nough ter see you wa'n't nebber converted. Go wait on de door w'en de young mist'ss goes out; an' Pomp, as soon as she's took her horse, you tackle up Whitefoot in de wagon, and go long up to Souf Pond an' git me a bar'l of white sand for my floors. I tole you dat dis mornin'."

"A lady to see me," murmured Teresa, stepping lightly down the stair. "Who can it be!"

Nor was the question answered as she entered the great square parlor, looking easterly to the sea and northerly to Captain's Hill, its furniture and arrangements as nearly as possible a reproduction of the room where Squire Lothrop and James Warren had awaited the doctor some years before.

Instead of those stately gentlemen, the slender figure of a girl, her rather remarkable height accented by her close-fitting riding habit, stood motionless at one of the eastern windows, gazing so steadfastly upon the sea that she did not heed the gentle entrance of her hostess, until the latter said: —

"You wish to see me, madam?"

"Ah!" and turning suddenly, the stranger showed a dark face, undeniably handsome, but somewhat over-determined and powerful for so young a woman, since

she could hardly have seen more than twenty birthdays.

"You are Mistress Teresa LeBaron?"

"Yes."

"And I am Deborah Cushing, of Hingham. Master Cushing of the school here is my brother, and Seth Cushing is my father."

"I — we know Master Cushing a little," said Teresa faltering, "I am afraid my brothers give him a vast of trouble; perhaps he has sent you" —

The stranger laughed a little harshly. "Sent me to chide you for your brothers' misdeeds!" exclaimed she. "Well, no, not just that. I came on my own occasions — and yours."

"Will you sit down?" said Teresa, pointing to one of the great square armchairs standing sentinel-like each side of the hearth. "I — I shall be very glad" — Something in her throat choked the utterance, and sinking into the chair opposite that of her guest she looked wistfully into her face, while the color sank from her own, even to the lips. Deborah Cushing regarded her attentively, almost scornfully.

"You try to say you will be very glad to pleasure me if you can, and some fright at your own words chokes them back again. Is it not so?"

"Yes. How can you tell?"

"Lord, child, I read it on your face like print, and glad am I not to be of so pliable a make. Pluck up a spirit, girl, and don't be a coward, though you're but a woman."

"Pardon me, Mistress Cushing, but it seems to me you are a little overbold in so judging and advising a stranger. Please to make known your business with me."

“Nay, let me consider you a moment first, and do you take no offense where none is meant. So timid a moment back, and so delicate-stately now ! ’T is like a toy some sailor man brought to my sister Lyddy : the figure of a man, with a stick in his hand, and you could cuff it this way or that, it bowed to the ground with the blow ; but so soon as you drew back your hand, up it jumped, and fetched you a crack with the stick made the water spring from your eyes.”

“Your errand, please.”

“Nay, now, be not so stiff and proud with a maid like yourself. I wish you no ill, Teresa, indeed I do not.”

“You hardly could wish a stranger ill, madam.”

“Well, well, you proud peat, be as offish as you will, but it fits not with such pride to steal away another girl’s man.”

“What ! — I — I do not understand ! ”

“I forced your guard there, my dear ! Oh, I know the art of fence as well as my brothers, and have claimed first blood before to-day.”

“Tell me, I beseech you, what you mean.”

“Well, then, in sober sadness, Teresa, how much thought have you of Simeon Samson ? ”

“Good heavens, Mistress Cushing” —

“Call me Deborah ; ’t will make the matter simpler and freer.”

“How can you ask me — why should you — Oh, what is it to you, maiden ? ”

“Child, ’t is — Come, now, don’t cry. I’m like a man in that ; I never can abide to see another cry ; and if I fain must cry myself, ’t is like tearing the heart out of my body, and leaves me as wounded. There, there,

dear, I'll tell thee what I never told him or thought to tell any one, — I love him, and 't is life or death to me to have him."

"Is he promised to you?"

"Yes, and no. Had he been really promised, there had been no need for me to come here; the man's word's as good as another's oath. And had he not been pledged in a way, I had not been here, for I am no pirate to seize what is not mine own; a letter of marque, may be, armed for reprisal, but no worse."

"How could he come here, then?" — began Teresa, but paused, her face dyed scarlet, as she remembered her father's authoritative invitations and encouragement to the man he had openly elected as his son-in-law.

"How could he come here?" echoed Deborah. "Yes, that is what I want to know. Of one thing I am sure: he has never spoken to you of marriage, Teresa?"

"No, never."

"And how much hath he really said? Nay, now, be neither shy nor proud with me, girl. Don't you see that here are three lives, three worthy lives too, set upon the turn of the moment, and it befits you and me to put aside all pretty, yea-nay, maiden manners, and speak the truth as boldly as if we wore hose instead of petticoats. This man hath been my bachelor for a matter of three years, and if he has not spoken of marriage it was because we both knew that his sailor wage was not enough for him to keep a wife on, and I was over young to leave my home. But six months ago he rode over to Hingham to tell me how he had got berth as mate on board the *Lydia*, your brother Goodwin's brigantine, and had promise of going captain next

voyage, 'And then, Deborah,' says he, 'I can take me a wife.' You'll tell me, perhaps, he said not what wife, but had you seen his face, and heard his voice" —

"You know me little, Deborah, or you would believe I never should seek by a quibble to set aside the truth. If the young man told you by look and voice that he asked you to be his wife, his words mattered little enough."

"So proud, so proud, and yet so lissome and so gentle-sweet! I hardly know to read you aright, maiden. I would not hurt so tender a thing; mayhap I, who am so strong and fearless, could better fight against disappointment than a soft creature like you."

"Nay, you said but now I was proud, and let me remind you, mistress, that what seems so valuable to you may not be of so much worth in my eyes."

"Oh, you don't care for Simeon Samson! You have only amused yourself with his admiration! You are like the Frenchwomen from whom you come, and are what they call a coquette!"

But as Deborah poured forth her angry utterances, and rose from her chair to give them scope, Teresa rose too, turned deadly pale, looked helplessly toward the door, and sank down again. In an instant Deborah was at her side, kneeling with her arms around the other's slender waist.

"There, there, now, I might have seen — great, coarse, stupid creature that I am, not to know you'd turn at bay just like a doe defending her fawn! Forgive me, darling, for I love you, Teresa, I love you already, and I see how that poor boy of mine forgot all else when he came anigh you. No wonder he despised such an one as me! Ah me, maid, what shall we do,

we two ! One must suffer, and I am the strongest ; it must be me ” —

“ Nay, now, Deborah, wait, — wait but a moment till this faintness passes. Sit you down again, and be very still. I am a little overborne with it all.”

“ Yes, I am too rough and rude to match with you in any fashion. Take your time, mistress, — take your own time.”

And rising with a motion that showed her shapely limbs to be filled with muscles of steel, the tall girl seated herself as she was bidden, and resting her chin upon her hand looked sadly out at the sea.

In a moment Teresa spoke, and her voice, if a little chill, was very gentle.

“ It would be churlish for me to deny some confidence in return for yours, Mistress Deborah, and I will confess that I have looked with interest upon Master Samson’s visits, especially as my father, who of course knew naught of this other matter, seemed to encourage them ” —

“ The doctor knows a fine man when he sees him,” interposed Deborah, proudly. The doctor’s daughter smiled gently, and continued in the same hushed voice.

“ Nor will I pretend to deny that Master Samson’s attentions were very particular while he stayed in Plymouth. I should be sorry to have you fancy that I cared for him without warrant,” — the sweet, cold voice faltered a little, but presently went on, — “ and yet I can assure you most earnestly that never a word was spoke ” —

“ ’Twas you that said a while ago that words mattered little,” interrupted Deborah somewhat sullenly.

“ Yes, but I pretend to no especial looks nor tones,

at least so far as any prospect of the future might be meant," replied Teresa, with patient dignity. "I can see now that Master Samson was constrained in his own mind, and — ah, well — at any rate, he never told me that by next voyage he should be able to keep a wife. I do not claim him in any way; he is yours to-day as much as ever he was."

"Nay, you mean, perhaps, he is as much mine as you have power to give him to me; but neither you nor I, maiden, can put him back where he stood before he ever saw your face, and heard your voice, and felt the something, whose name I know not, that encompasses your presence."

"He will soon forget me, Deborah, and in all honesty I wish you happy with him, — as happy as you fancy you should be."

"That's a two-sided wish; you mean that my fancy outruns the possibility. But no matter; I can judge better of that than you can. And now let me tell you, mistress, even to your proud, beautiful face, that I shall make Simeon Samson a better wife than you would; for I love him as you never could, I love him a great deal better than I do myself, and I never shall stop to think whether he pays me all the observance and all the consideration that he should, and which you never will forgive to any man alive, be he sweetheart or husband. But I — why, I love him, girl, I love him as I do the sea, and the sky, and my own life, and all that makes life good; I can give myself to him, and willingly spend and be spent for his happiness, and his comfort, and his reputation, no matter what comes to me. I do believe, if he loved me not at all, I could do it, so long as he loved no other woman, — I could not

bear that, although even so, I could not cease to love him, but I would never see him. He is a man that needs a patient wife, for he is not patient himself; he has a temper, and he claims obedience from those he governs, even as he gives loyal obedience to those above him; but he cannot abide a lawgiver in his own house, nor must one mind a hasty word when he is vexed and weary."

"And you are so meek that you can bear all this better than I?" asked Teresa, with a fine smile lighting, but not softening, her dark eyes.

"Nay, I am not meek at all, and so it is somewhat I have to give to him," replied Deborah triumphantly. "When for his sake I go softly and speak gently and answer mildly, 't is all as if I said, 'I love you, dear, I love you!' You could not lay so much at his feet, for you have no fiend of a temper to overcome."

"No, Deborah, I could love none but God in that fashion, and in very truth I believe that He is my only love."

"You're surely not a Papist!" exclaimed Deborah, starting back, and Teresa smiled ever so faintly as she replied:—

"No, but my grandsire was, and I know not that he was the worse for it."

"Poor soul, he was a Frenchman, and knew no better, but we"—

"Nay, let us not wander into new fields of difference. Your errand is done, and well done, mistress, and no more remains to say except Godspeed. May your marriage be very happy, and both you and he content to the end."

"I would I could be content even now," and Deborah,

looked wistfully into the pure, pale face so calmly confronting her.

“How can you be less than content with what you sought so eagerly?”

“Oh, I cannot talk as you do, — I cannot tell why I am not content. You make no moan, you have not shed one tear or said one angry word, and yet I fear me there is a wound beneath that will drain your life dry. Upbraid me if you will, — claim the man, and who knows but even now I would give him to you! But so pale, so proud, so still — and yet I do know it in mine own heart — so hurt!”

“You have no right to say it, no right to think it, no right to judge!” cried Teresa, a sudden flush staining her face and neck, and dying away instantly. “You could not, if you would, give this man to me, for I would not have him. I — I — care not for him. Deborah, would you indeed do me a pleasure?”

“Try me, lass!”

“Then set your wedding day as soon as may be. Captain Samson sails in the *Lydia* this day fortnight. Let him sail as your husband.”

“And that would pleasure you?”

“Ay, more than aught else.”

“Then, if he will have it so, it shall be so, although I had not thought of it.”

A moment longer the two girls stood looking at each other, and then Deborah dropped upon her knees, and, twining her arms around the other's waist, cried piteously, —

“Oh, dear maid, sweet maid, do not hate me! You can spare him better than I could, for you have all heaven to comfort you. Say you forgive me, Teresa!”

"I have naught to forgive. May God bless you and yours while life shall last."

And stooping, she pressed two cold soft lips upon the other's brow, and slid gently from her clasp.

CHAPTER XIII.

A TRAP.

“Hi! Mother Crewe! Mother Crewe!”

“Well, who calls mother Crewe, in such a masterful fashion?”

“Isaac LeBaron. Come out here, old woman, till I speak with you.”

“Oho, my young master can’t take the trouble to alight, but the old woman must hobble out to him! Well, then, here am I, worshipful Master Isaac LeBaron, and what is your will?”

“My father has gone to Boston, and bade me come and see how John White fares to-day, and here is more medicine for him. I am bound for Carver to see other sick folk, so I cannot stay.”

“And if you could, I fear me even your skill, Master Isaac, would not much avail a man that hath been stark these six hours. But give me the med’cine. ’T will do another time.”

“Dead?”

“Ay, dead as Adam.”

“In that case, my father bade me warn the selectmen, and they will send some one to bury him. And you are to roll him in a tarred sheet, and lock the house before you leave him. You have the tar and all you need, he told me. Is there anything more to be said?”

“Naught, but thank y’ for your courtesy and your bounty, Master Isaac.”

The young man colored angrily, for he had not been courteous, nor did his pockets contain a penny with which to bribe good will; so affecting not to hear the old woman's hint, he nodded slightly, set spurs to his horse, and rode on, a goodly and pleasant sight, in the clear summer morning, with the green leaves flecking the sunlight upon his path, and the pungent aroma of the bayberries rising around his horse's hoofs. Mother Crewe looked after him, her toothless jaws working with a mouthful of unspoken evil thoughts, then shook her head with a smile more malevolent even than the thoughts.

"Pity he must meddle and make with Molly Peach's brood! Pity so fine a springald should go down with them! Well, I must have help ere I meddle with yon carcass."

And closing the door of the hut, the old woman hobbled down the road, and presently came within sight of the widow Ring's cottage, and Yetmercy on the doorstep looking idly along the dusty road toward town. A gleam of malice crossed the face of the old witch, and hastening her footsteps she cried:—

"Did Master Isaac find you, Yetmercy?"

"Master Isaac!" exclaimed the girl, with a sudden color in her face, and eagerly advancing to meet her enemy, "No, I have not seen him! Is he looking for me?"

"Ay, and I thought he went from me to find you. He wants you to give me some help up yonder."

"In the pest-house?"

"Nay, never turn white on such a little word as that. There's no danger now. Dr. Isaac bade me tell you so, and that it would greatly please him to find you there when he comes back. Besides, the town gives a great reward for those who undertake that work, and money is none so plentiful in your house, Yetmercy."

“No, — but if the young doctor bids me go, I’ll go where no money would tempt me.”

“Ay, ay, I believe it well,” muttered the old woman, nodding her head and blinking her watery eyes like an owl at mid-day, as she stole sidelong looks at the pretty creature standing in the sunshine before her, and half relented of her purpose, but from the open window hard at hand came a querulous cry : —

“Yetmercy, where are you, child?”

“Here, mother, — coming,” replied the girl, and mother Crewe’s face darkened as she laid a claw upon the girl’s arm, whispering hurriedly, —

“Don’t let her keep you. Isaac will be there waiting for you, anon.”

“I’ll come, certain true, I’ll come,” replied Yetmercy, in the same tone. “Go on, mother Crewe, and I’ll be there as soon as you.”

“And don’t tell your mother aught about it, or she’ll keep you.”

“No, I won’t. Go on, now, and I’ll overtake you in five minutes.”

“And if Isaac comes before you, I’ll bid him wait.”

“Yes, I shall surely be there.”

“Yes, my dear, well do I know you will,” chuckled the old woman, as she hobbled back toward the woods; nor did any kind fate interpose to save her victim, who in fact arrived at the hut in the same moment as herself.

“Now, child, to work, — why the man’s in a swoond, surely!” —

“Oh, mother Crewe, he’s dead?”

“Nay, child, ’tis but one of the weak spells he takes at times. Here, come and rub his hands betwixt yours,

so, — and his arms — now rub him hearty and bring back the life ! ”

“ Oh, Mother Crewe, it frightens me ! Sure the man is dead, the hand is so cold, so stiff, and ’tis so loathly too with these sores ! ”

“ A murrain on you, girl ! And you hoping to be a doctor’s wife by and by ! What will he think of such a coward heart ? Come, now, here is the comb, straighten you his hair, and make him decent before the doctor comes.”

“ But he is dead, — I know that he is dead, and I am afraid ! ” moaned the girl, taking the comb in her icy fingers, and passing it through the dead man’s hair.

“ Say you so, Yetmercy ? Well, mayhap you ’re right after all, wench. You do indeed show a wondrous insight into all things, fitting that same doctor’s wife. Mayhap you ’re right, sweetheart, and the man is dead, but if so be, you ’re ready here to help me lay him out. There comb his hair, and curl it on your little fingers ; and here’s a cloth, wash his face, and see if you can shut those staring eyes,” —

“ Oh, I can’t, I can’t bear it, — let me go, — let me get out of this house, — oh, for God’s sake, let me go, mother Crewe, — let me — let me ! ”

And frantic with terror the girl threw herself upon her tormentor and tried to force her from the door, but the old hag, laughing like a demon, stood fast and barred the way.

“ What, going to leave the tryst before your sweetheart comes ! Did not he bid you come and wait, and will you be the first to lose patience ! Nay, that man on the bed will never spoil sport, he ’ll take no note of all the loving words and sweet kisses ” —

“Let me go, let me go — Isaac — oh — mother — oh, what is it ails me — let me go” —

She fell swooning on the floor, and mother Crewe stood for a moment looking down while the wild fire of insanity blazed in her eyes and flamed upon her cheek. Then lightly stirring the prostrate body with her foot, she raised a clenched hand toward heaven, crying, —

“Bathsheba’s life against hers! My own girl lay like this, and none pitied! Life for life — ’t is God’s own law!”

Then, closing the door, she set off for the town, and finding one of the selectmen reported that her patient was dead and that she had left Yetmercy Ring to guard the place until the proper officers should come to bury the dead.

“But she has never had the sickness! Was not she afraid to go?” asked the selectman.

“Nay, she is sweet upon Isaac LeBaron, and thinks no danger can come where he is,” replied the old woman with a jeering laugh, and her hearer hastened to count out the pieces of silver which were the price of her treachery, and bid her begone out of his office.

CHAPTER XIV.

LUCY HAMMATT'S SUFFLET.

"GOOD morrow to you, Lucy!"

"Oh, 't is you, Patty! Good morrow, and what's the good word with you?"

"Oh, I don't know — seems to me you're always cooking. As for me, I hate it."

"Ah, but you have n't a goodman to cook for as I have. When the Captain's at home it's just a delight to set goodies before him and see how he savors them. Salt junk and sea-biscuit six months or a year running whet a man's appetite for something more delicate."

"And what will you have for dinner to-day? Mayhap I'll stay and draw up."

"Do, and you'll be kindly welcome, Patty. The Captain loves to see a comely young face now and again, and your nephew Abr'am is never tired of Aunt Patty who is more of a cousin than an aunt to him."

"After that sweet sop surely I'll stay. Shall I lay my calash in the bedroom?" And without waiting for reply Martha Howland carefully took off the lofty green silk structure resembling, as its name implied, the head of a *calèche*, that charming French carriage so disastrous to the fame of La Belle Stewart, and having tightened the belt riding as high under her arms as Nature would permit, and tenderly patted and lightened up the curls clustering at either side her face, and seen that

her monstrous comb stood erect at the back, she came back into the kitchen, asking, —

“ Shall I do a hand’s turn for you, Lucy ? ”

“ No, no ; sit you down in the great chair by the window. You’re quite too fine for anything useful. How happen you all dressed up before dinner ? ”

“ Why, Betty LeBaron asked me to come and spend the day with her, and to meet her sweetheart, Ammy Robbins, the parson’s brother, you know.”

“ Well, why did n’t you go ? ” asked Lucy Hammatt, absently, as she tasted and savored some golden compound in a wooden bowl.

“ Why — I — well, — oh, never mind ! ”

“ Why, Patty, what’s upset you so ? You look fit to cry, you silly wench. What’s to do, child ? ”

“ Well, Betty Foster told me not half an hour ago, that they are all saying ” —

“ Stop now, Patty ! Who’s ‘ they ’ ? ”

“ Oh, Becca Fuller, and Molly and Nancy Mayhew, and the rest, I don’t know just who,” pouted Patty.

“ Father always used to say that ‘ maybees ’ did n’t fly except in May, and this is September, so never mind them, and Betty Foster had better read what the Apostle James says of the tongue. Come, now, what was it after all ? Tell me quick, before I put my cake to bake.”

“ Well, she said they said I was courting Isaac LeBaron — there then ! ”

“ And is it true, Patty ? ”

“ You know it is n’t, Lucy Hammatt.”

“ Well, then, what do you care ? Suppose they said I had but one leg and t’ other was a wooden one, d’ ye think ’t would fret me ? ”

Patty laughed, displaying some white teeth and very

pretty dimples, but as she settled herself in the great roundabout chair at the garden window she said, —

“ Well, I could n’t go right along to the LeBarons’ after that, so I turned in here.”

“ And you ’re welcome, dear, as I said before, but now just sit you quiet and look out o’ window, or where you will till I get my cake baking, and see to my dinner. Come, now, Flora, ’t is time to clear out the bake-kettle, and have out the roaster. Where ’s Toby ? ”

“ Just yere, mist’ss,” replied the portly but benignant negress, coming forward, while Toby, an imp of ten years old or thereabout, poked his head in at the garden door, concluded there was time for a few more somersaults, and disappeared. Martha Howland sat and looked about her, half pettish, half amused. It was a pleasant scene that met her eye. The great kitchen extending all across the back of the house opened by two windows and a door upon a garden sloping toward the sea, and filled to overflowing with those honest simple flowers that sufficed our grandmothers. Roses and lilies, and pinks, and sweet-williams, and hollyhocks, and marigolds, and heart’s-ease, and “ daffies,” and jonquils, and daisies, and primroses, and a choice bed of “ flower-de-luce ” crowded and struggled for room, and hastened each as soon as its season allowed, to shoulder out its predecessor, and flaunt abroad its banner of victory. Some basket bee-hives set at one side of a little plot of velvet turf, sent out their murmurous multitude to add the song of happy toil to the idle melodies of crickets and “ pipers ” and all the merry useless tribe of cicadæ. The distant plash of the tide upon the beach came vaguely borne upon the wings of a wind that rustled among the lime tree leaves of Squire Watson’s new

plantation on North Street, and freighting itself with odors of dulce and kelp and such wild scents as are most sweet to dwellers by the sea, added as a tribute to the fair girl waiting to welcome his toying fingers in her hair, a hundred delicate breaths of autumn flowers and ripened fruit and honey-combs, and that strange, pungent, intoxicating, yet saddest of odors, that seems the very breath of early autumn, the smell of dying grass, and falling leaves, and shrinking sap, the fragrant dying kiss of summer.

Some such thought, or rather, some such consciousness crossed the mind of the girl already saddened enough, as she chose to think, with her own concerns, and with an impatient sigh she turned from the window to look within.

Here, at least, was a cheerful scene. The great open fireplace was so long that the mouth of the brick oven was inside the jamb, and there was ample room to step inside and, as Flora was now doing, to clear the oven by the summary process of flinging the charred brands upon the fire at the other end of the great cavern of a fireplace, where stood a pair of massive iron andirons or "dogs" as they were often called, each provided on the inner face with a strong hook on which to lay the spit when meat was to be roasted.

Upborne by these dogs glowed a noble fire built in orthodox and approved style with mighty back log bedded in ashes that it might glow and char but not consume ; a generous forestick to act as a bulwark or sea-wall to hold the mighty flood of flame in place ; a mass of hearty oak sticks between, and when the fire was first lighted in the morning a crown and garniture of shavings, twigs, and such light feathery stuff as might

suggest the ruddy foam of a sun-tipped sea. On the high mantle-tree shelf, just above the fire, lay the tinder box that was to set this mass of fuel alight, and surely in some bitter winter mornings, when even the banked-up back log gave no warmth to Flora's freezing fingers, she may be pardoned for fancying that "de debbel he very se'f," got into "dat yer ole tin'er-box, an' would n't lef him light up nohow."

Beside the tinder box stood an array of candlesticks, solid iron ones for kitchen use, japanned tin for bedroom lights, and two pair of goodly brass ones, to be placed on the tea-table or to light the housewife at her evening spinning, knitting, or sewing. The snuffers and the extinguishers were not wanting, and the row was closed with a couple of tin lanthorns and another of horn. From a mighty crane above the fire hung, upon their various pot-hooks, the jolly round tea-kettle murmuring low at its exile to the remotest corner, and a couple of pots, one exhaling a delicious odor of wine and spices in spite of the rim of rye dough "luting" the crevice between rim and lid, while two or three skillets, a sort of saucepan mounted upon legs, stood in various degrees of remove from the fire each simmering at its appointed temperature. A smooth hickory board whereon to bake bannocks stood ready for use along with the "creeper" and its cousin the "spider," while in the bake-kettle, or Dutch oven just emptied of its embers by Flora, the mistress was tenderly placing her loaf of pound cake thickly sown with caraway seeds, to be presently covered closely with the hollowed lid heaped with live coals, and there to rise, and crisp, and brown in undisturbed fruition until after the bake-kettle was nearly cold, when the cake would emerge more

perfect and more delicious than anything we degenerate feeders ever dream of.

"Is there aught for dinner beyond the seed-cake?" inquired saucy Patty, as her sister rose flushed and triumphant from her knees. "'T will be delicate if not very satisfying."

"Were I to uncover yonder kettle," replied Lucy, good-naturedly, "I'll warrant you'd see as goodly a piece of ollymode beef as even mother ever set on table, and there's a plum-pudding boiling, and — oh, you'll see when dinner time comes. Now, Flora, get those pies in before your oven cools, and the dish of custard close at the mouth to take out first, — there, girl, now the door, push it in and chock the stick to hold it firm. That's right, and next you may put down the Carolina potatoes to boil, and at half past, the white ones. — Patty, you shall see me make my sufflet! 'T is something new in these parts, I warrant you. The captain got me the resait from some great cook in London, but they say it came from France in the beginning, and may be you'll like it all the better, seeing that Ike LeBaron's gran'ther was a mounseer."

"Now, Lucy" —

"There, there, call it unsaid, only don't hinder me now to quarrel and make up. Toby, see if your master is in sight."

"Yis'm; jes' stannin' at de corner here a' laffin' long o' Mas' Tom Howland."

"He'll be in on the stroke of twelve — eight bells, as he calls it," said the wife, seeming to amplify and heighten in person as she prepared for her grand *chef d'œuvre*. Come, Flora, get up the dinner. Swing out the crane and take off the ollymode, so that I can

make the sauce. Everything else is done but dishing, and that you can manage as well as I. Remember the wine sauce is to simmer till you take up the pudding. Are the vegetables ready?"

"Jes' ready, mist'ss."

"Well, then, — there, the sauce is ready and you can dish the beef while I make the sufflet. Fetch the silver dish with the cover, and the wooden spit, and the dredging-box, and a dish of sifted flour, and then the roll of butter that's cooling down the well, and, Toby, you be right on hand."

"Wish't you had n' nebber foun' out how ter make dat ting," grumbled Toby — ruefully glancing at the preparations, as he pulled off his jacket, remaining in a homespun shirt and trousers all of blue and white check, contrasting finely with his coffee-colored legs and feet.

"None o' you' saace, boy, 'thout you want you' ears boxed," remarked his mother *sotto voce*, but the mistress was too busy to be easily disturbed. With her comely arms bare to the elbow and her apron tied close up under her neck, she was jealously examining the long walnut rod, something like a ramrod, handed her by Chloe. Satisfied that it could not be cleaner, she floured her hands, and from the tin pail, beaded and dripping with the icy waters of the well, she took a roll of butter weighing about a pound, and carefully thrust the wooden spit through it lengthwise, balancing the weight as equally as possible.

"What *are* you going to do, Lucy!" exclaimed Patty now thoroughly interested and coming toward the table. "Not roast that butter!"

"Just what I *am* going to do," replied Mistress Hammatt briefly. "Come, Toby!"

And Toby with a groan went down on his knees before the fire, burned now to a fiery furnace of hickory coals.

Laying the spit across the hooks on the inside of the great dogs the mistress seized the dredging-box obsequiously handed her by Chloë, and as Toby turned the spit swiftly and steadily, she began shaking flour upon the revolving ball of butter, which before it could melt and drip was covered with a brown glaze of combined flour, butter, and crisp, such as one *used* to see upon the breast of a well roasted chicken, but now sees only in the fond dreams of a childhood's home.

Of course, as the heat penetrated, the butter within broke lava-like through this thin outer crust, but being at once met with a fresh shower of dry flour became in turn an outer crust, to be broken through by a deeper eruption, and so on, and so on, for perhaps half an hour, during which arduous period Toby never ceased to twirl the spit, his mistress never ceased to shake the flour, being every now and then supplied with a fresh dredging-box by the delighted Flora, and Patty, cool and fresh in her muslin gown and cherry ribbons, never ceased to marvel and exclaim.

"There!" exclaimed Lucy at length, straightening her back, and pushing the hair from her streaming forehead. "That's done, and a dainty bit you'll find it, Miss Patty!"

"It had need be, for the work it cost," remarked Patty dryly, as she watched her sister deftly deposit the soufflé, now a frothing, bubbling mass of golden brown crisp, five or six times its original size, in a handsome silver dish, and put the cover over it.

"Is everything else on the table, Chloe?"

"Yes'm, and Mas' Cap'n done sharpened de carvin' knife two, tree times over."

"Ay, he's hungry, — that's good!" murmured the wife, from the bedroom where she was hastily washing her face and hands and smoothing her hair.

"You looked roasted yourself, Lu," said her sister, as the elder emerged drawing down her sleeves. "Before I'd do as much as that for any man!" —

"That shows you don't love any man," coolly replied Lucy. "Come along, child."

And the two passed down the cool dim hall to the dining-room, looking out upon the King's Highway. Here awaiting them stood the captain, a good many years older than when we saw him last, and ripened from a handsome stripling to a comely middle-aged man, tall and large of frame, dark of skin, both by nature and long exposure, but with the same keen hazel eyes and masterful mouth as of yore, and with an air of mingled authority and great personal kindness upon his firm large features.

"Patty! Welcome, my lass! Come to see after your sailor-brother, or is it a motherly oversight of Abe and Lucy? She's up in Boston visiting her uncle William, and Abe's gone fishing with Ike LeBaron, — won't be home till the flow o' the tide, and that's bedtime."

"Ask a blessing, husband, and let us sit down," interrupted the housewife impatiently. "There's a suflet, and that you know can't stand."

"Oh!" — And resolutely closing his eyes against temptations, the captain invoked a hasty blessing, and then sitting down, cried, —

"Off with the cover, Luce, and let us feast our eyes, before we do our palates."

"'Tis tolerably successful, I hope," said Lucy, taking off the cover and handing it to Toby, now in his jacket and slippers, and modestly gazing upon the seething and tremulous volcano before her.

"I should say so," replied her husband heartily. "I tell you what it is, Patty Howland, a man that gets Lucy Hammatt's sister for a wife is a lucky man, and so I shall tell Ike LeBaron the first time I see him."

CHAPTER XV.

THE KING IS DEAD! LONG LIVE THE KING!

"THE pusson nex' door want speak to you, sah, w'en you done breakfas," announced Quashy, coming into the room where Doctor LeBaron with his daughters Elizabeth, Priscilla, and Margaret, and their brothers Francis and William, sat at breakfast.

"The person next door? What, the new tenant?" And the doctor smiled grimly.

"No, sah, not Mas' Joseph, but de carpenter pusson, to'der side our alley."

"Why don't you say Master Rickard or William Rickard, you idiot?"

"Did n' know as he was anybody's mas'r, sah. He's in de kitchen wid he hat on."

"Quash, you're both an anachronism and an exotic. Go show Mr. Rickard into my office. Now, Bess, I shall have to leave you at both ends of the table; Frank and Bill, look out you don't make your sister any trouble, or I'll show you into the office myself."

The office, in a little northerly extension of the house, had a door upon the alley dividing the LeBaron estate from that of Giles Rickard, and here the doctor presently found his visitor filling up the doorway with his gaunt loose-jointed figure, and thoughtfully surveying his own premises from the vantage ground of the two steps.

"Ah, good morning, neighbor Rickard! There's no place like home to you, is there?"

"Well, doctor, I don't know; perhaps I don't justly take in your meaning, but I was thinking my grapes was about ready to gather, and seem a leetle forrarder than yours, now, don't they?"

"Like enough, neighbor, I have no time to look after them and the negroes are careless. You're not ailing this morning?"

"Thank the Lord I'm never ailing, Doctor. No sir, I only stepped in, in a kind o' neighbor fashion, to ask you to just throw an eye over this little account, that I'm a-going to render in to the town for building the new parsonage. It's most six months now since Mr. Robbins's folks moved in, and I've been kind o' tinkering round 'long as I had time" —

"The parson's wife has complained bitterly that you never found time to put up the shelves and hooks and such conveniences that were promised," interrupted the doctor rather severely. Rickard looked slowly and shamefacedly at him.

"Well, doctor, I'll allow these little puttering jobs do kind o' hang in the wind; you see there was Deacon Foster's barn had *got* to be shingled 'fore the fall rains come on, and then Squire Watson would n't take no for an answer, but I'd got to set up his new fence, and so — but I guess we'll call the parsonage job done now, and I'll send in this little mite of a bill for the balance of the work, next town-meeting, if you think it's all ship-shape, and above board."

"Want I should take a private view, before I inspect it officially, eh?"

"Well, yes, Doctor, something so. Here 't is."

And from the pocket of his leather breeches, the carpenter produced a small and dirty piece of paper which the doctor, smoothing out upon his table, read aloud: —

Town of Plymouth to William Rickard, Dr

Finishing the entray with Brackett Sta'rs and win-	
scutt the hol	£52.10. 0
Finishing the two front rooms with Brest-work	
over the Chimneys Shelves and Cornishing . . .	£50.00. 0
Finishing the two front chambers and Entray with	
common carving	£29.00. 0
Finishing the two back chambers	£25.00. 0
Finishing the bedroom with shelves and mop-	
boards	£20.00. 0
Finishing the ciching and back stars with all the	
conveniences common	£18.00. 0
	£194.10s. 0d

“Why, yes, I don’t see but that is all fair, Mr. Rickard,” said the doctor, smiling a little, as he returned the bill, “and I will certainly advise my brother selectmen to approve and settle the account as soon as presented. I hear that you are thinking of moving, Rickard.”

“Well, yes, Doctor, I some think of it. The old house has gone out of our hands — fact, folks call it the Allyne house sometimes, right to my face, though its been Rickard property a hundred years or more, but now father’s sold out for good and all to Squire Lothrop, and bein’ a tenant on your own land don’t seem to set well on my stomach, and I guess I’ll be jogging before long.”

“We shall be sorry to lose our neighbors,” replied the doctor pleasantly. “Your father and I set off this alley, half from each estate, and that is in some sort a link though it be a division.”

"They call it LeBaron's Alley, though, — never Rickard's Alley, that I know of," replied the man slowly. "We Rickards are one of the old annicient fam'lies that have run their race, and now had better get out of sight and say no more about it. But Rickards lived in Plymouth before Lothrop's ever came off o' Cape Cod."

And with an air of wounded dignity, the carpenter made two strides across the alley and in at his father's garden gate, while the doctor, with a smile of somewhat pensive humor upon his face, put on his hat and coat, and strolled into the street. Next to his own house stood a smaller one built by his stepfather Return Waite, but now owned by the doctor, and occupied by his son Joseph, who some years before this, had married Parson Leonard's pretty daughter Sarah. Next to this, afterward known as the Churchill house, stood a comfortable, substantial new house, with garden ground around it, and a comely young matron standing at the door.

"Good morrow to you, Mrs. Robbins," said the doctor, taking his hat quite off his head. "I am happy to hear from Rickard that your house is entirely finished at last."

"If we call it finished, Doctor," replied the parson's wife, with a dubious smile. "I suppose a man *would* call it done."

"But a little healthful exercise remains for the dominee," suggested the doctor.

"Mr. Robbins has no time for mechanical labors," — began the young wife, rather primly, but was interrupted by a genial voice, as a handsome though somewhat portly figure stepped past her out of the door.

"Good morning to you, Doctor! Is my wife telling ill tales of me to my own deacon?"

“Good morrow to you, Parson, but the ill tales are no more certain than that I am a deacon, or shall be.”

“Yes, yes, Doctor LeBaron, you must serve the Lord like the rest of us, when you are called to it. Why I — good-by Jennie, for a little time” —

And with an affectionate look into his wife’s eyes, the parson stepped down, and moving along by the doctor’s side, continued in a lower tone, —

“I depend upon you, sir, as a man older than myself, a godly physician of the body, as I of the soul, and one who knows this place and people, as a stranger cannot. It is an awful responsibility, Doctor, yes, awful to be placed, as one who must give account for their souls, over one’s fellow mortals, and already I feel at times to say with Moses, ‘I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me,’ and I fear indeed that, having preached to others, I shall at the last be found a castaway.”

The doctor’s eyes rested keenly upon the speaker’s face, marking the painful flush, the knitted brow, the tense lines about the mouth, and then slipping his hand within the other’s arm, he turned his footsteps up the steep ascent of Burying Hill, while he slowly answered, —

“It seems to me, brother, that one set apart for Moses’ work, should strive rather for Moses’ faith and reliance upon God, than echo those impatient sayings and lapses of confidence which in the end led to his notable punishment.”

“True, true indeed!” murmured the young divine. “Unstable as water — a faithless shepherd — a slothful servant!”

“Nay, now, Parson, nay,” interrupted the doctor in a

lighter tone, "'t is no better than selfconceit to turn Moses and the prophets and the gospels into accusation against yourself. It is only Paul who dared call himself chief among sinners, — for my part I am content to rank myself among the multitude, bad enough, no doubt, but not excelling, even in wickedness."

"Perhaps that is more salutary humility than the other," said the minister, pondering.

"'T is more likely to be true. But come, now, parson, if you do really feel that my experience of this people, and the fact of my having after my own fashion served the Lord for more than twice your lifetime, make me an adviser who can be of use — a sort of Joshua to your Moses, able to bear up your hands when human strength fails, — why, I will be your deacon if the church calls me to it."

"And in the name of the Lord we both serve, I thank you most heartily" —

"One moment, please! As I understand this office of deacon, there is no spiritual charge laid upon me, nothing answerable to the office of deacon in the English Church, where it is the first step in Holy Orders?"

"Oh no, oh no. Our deacons in the Calvinistic reform of the old Church, are more like those of the Primitive time, Stephen, Philip, and the rest, men set apart to serve tables, succor the poor, see that all things are done decently and in order, and look after the temporalities of the church; the office is not that of a ruling elder, like our venerable Brother Faunce, so lately gone to his rest. That office will now, I think, fall into disuse."

"So be it, then, — ah, there is my old friend, Leonard. I heard he was in town."

"Then I will leave you," replied the minister, hurriedly. "The Reverend Mr. Leonard and I hold certain points of difference" —

"Being an older man, he is not so rigid as to the lines limiting salvation," suggested the doctor, with his whimsical smile; but his companion merely bowed hurriedly, and pursued his way over the hill, while LeBaron swerving to the left, climbed the steep little ascent, once the eastern face of the Pilgrim Fort, and joined the gaunt, worn figure of the man who stood with folded arms and fixed gaze, looking down upon the village at his feet, even as Myles Standish, a hundred and thirty years earlier, had stood upon the selfsame spot, and watched the Mayflower swinging at her anchor, while he pondered the possibilities of the future.

"Hi, neighbor! Glad to see you again," cried the doctor, panting a little over the shrewd ascent.

"And I am glad to see you, sir. I was thinking to enter your doors once more before I leave this place, forever."

"And so you shall; come and eat your dinner with me to-day, and many a day beside I hope."

"Nay, the Lord hath told me that my time is at hand. I came hither to-day to look once more upon the place where I, all unworthy, served Him for five and thirty years, and strove with His people even in their own despite, if by any means I might save some; — and yet, I fear me, I fear me!" —

"Truly, friend, if the Lord is as hard and as grudging a master as you parsons make Him out, it is but sorry work to try to serve Him."

"What, does yon sleek and comely youth, with his college honors and his skill in tongues, and his adherence

to the most straitest sect, — does he find the field a thorny one, and the talent a sore responsibility?" asked Leonard, excitement blazing in his haggard eyes, and a bitter smile playing about his mouth.

"He feels his responsibility as an honest minister must do," replied the doctor cautiously. "Are you for a walk, minister? I have to go and visit a woman just by here, at Prince's Bottom, and the good folk will be glad enough to see you, too." But the sore-hearted man did not hear him.

"When I look over this village, and think how I have toiled among its people," exclaimed he, waving a gaunt arm over the peaceful view spread out at his feet, "when I consider how I tried every means, perhaps unlawful and ill-advised means, when I brought Gilbert Tennant here, and set him to cry aloud, as a watchman who sees the enemy coming on apace" —

"Ay, but when he cried aloud from the pulpit, that two thirds of our communicants then partaking of the Lord's Supper, were unconverted men and women, whatever else he said was swallowed up in the obloquy of such an accusation," interrupted the doctor, rather hotly, for both he and his wife had been among those communicants.

"Well, well, — there was George Whitefield, later on; none could say that he was lacking in charity, or Christian courtesy."

"No, he was a wonderful — a truly wonderful preacher."

"And it was I who brought him to Plymouth, and gave my people this added means of grace!" exclaimed Leonard. "Yes, and it was I who moved men's hearts to renew the house of God, fallen to decay. It was I

who visiting from house to house, so exhorted, so pleaded, so insisted, that even the children gave their pennies, and the women their hoarded shillings into the treasury of the temple, and not eight years since, this goodly House at our feet was raised with prayer and thanksgiving, and they who were merry among us sang psalms, and joyful shouts of praise went up, and many a man grasped me by the hand and thanked me, that I had led them on to this good work. And now I stand here, a stranger, and an alien, and another man enters into my labors."

"Do you see this grave, Parson?"

"Yes. 'T is that of Yetmercy Ring, is it not?"

"Ay, and that poor child died blessing you, who had not shrunk from her loathly disease, but had, like the true shepherd, carried her in your bosom until you placed her in the arms of her Saviour. Is not one such memory enough to sweeten a good deal of bitterness?"

Leonard made no reply, but taking off his hat stood for a moment bareheaded, beside the lonely grave, not in prayer for the departed soul, which would have been to him a grievous sin, but perhaps laying a rebellious and disappointed heart at its Maker's Feet.

The doctor keenly eyed the face, thus bared to the scorching morning light, and saw there the shadows of a hand already poised to release the self-tormented spirit from its weary and decaying tabernacle, and as the parson resumed his hat, he once more placed his hand within his arm and gently said, —

"After all, I'll drive instead of walking, and while Quash harnesses, we'll step in and see your Sarah and my Joe, and their pretty bantlings."

CHAPTER XVI.

MARGOT.

“I AM going to take the chaise this morning, Bess; do you want to drive with me?”

“Thank you, father, but I promised Phyllis I’d help her do up the damsons and greengages to-day.”

“Ay, ay; well, do enough to fit out two houses while you are about it. You’ll want something sweet to make up for home. I’ll take Pris, where is she?”

“Oh what a pity, but she has gone to see Lucy Hammatt. I believe they were to ride into the woods after frost grapes.”

“And Lucy’s brother Abr’am was to go along and take care of them, I dare say! Oh, well, the poor old father is to be left all alone, I see. Lyddy, and Molly, and Nan, all with homes of their own, and Tressy in the Barbadoes, and now, you’re just on the wing, and Pris cares more for that swarthy lad than for any of her own kin, and my little Margaret is the only one who will remain to civilize this bear-garden of boys, — yes, and they are all marrying, too, but that does not so much matter.”

“O father, you do break my heart — in very truth I will stay at home and that right joyfully if you need me!”

“And would you, lass?” demanded the father, taking his comely daughter by the shoulders, and gazing into

her face. Not so beautiful a face as Teresa's, not so grand and imposing as Lydia's, but a very sweet and lovely face, pale, yet bright, and radiating a light of goodness that impressed every one who beheld it. Parson Robbin's brother Ammy thought it the most beautiful face in the world, and when those soft blue eyes smiled, 'yes,' into his own, and the gentle lips promised that the new parsonage at Norfolk in Connecticut should not long lack a mistress, the young minister feared that earth was becoming too delightful an abode for "a pilgrim and a stranger." Those sweet lips and sweeter eyes are tremulous with tears just now, yet bravely answer, —

"In very truth I would, father."

"Thou 'lt make a good wife, girl, who art so good a daughter. Nay then, don't mind my grumbling, Bess, — I'm getting an old man, and cross, but not such an ogre as to devour maidens' lives. Kiss me, girl, and go to thy pickling and potting."

"'T is preserving, father!" And a showery laugh made sudden sunshine upon the face but now so piteous. "And, father dear, if you will take Margaret for the drive, I'll have her ready in a little minute."

"Yes, I'll take Margot. She'll chatter my head off, and drive away the sulks. Never mind her dress, I'm only going out to Ponds, and they're not fastidious in toilets over there."

"In five minutes, father."

And in little more the chaise was at the door, young Pompey anxiously smoothing away some patches of dust from the sorrel mare's sleek sides and putting forelock and mane in their most becoming pose.

"Pomp, you have n't combed that mare this morn-

ing!" exclaimed the doctor sternly, as he placed a foot on the step.

"W'y, mas'r, I done curry-comb him till I fotch blood an' got scare. Unc' Quash, he say w'en he hear parson talk 'bout all folkse made o' dus' an' gwine back to it, he alluz t'ink o' ole Kate, an' won'er ef she ain' mos' got back to de fus' beginnin'."

"See here, Pomp! I think it's the dust in your jacket that gets on the mare, and I'm going to tell your father he should take a nice limber hickory rod and try to get it out. As for Quash, he'd better consider Deacon Foster's Boston, and Mr. Barnes's Nero, who were dealt with by the church, last Sunday" —

"Here am I, papa!" interrupted a blithe voice, and a little maid of eight or ten bright summers darted out of the house and into the chaise followed by Elizabeth with a warm gray shawl in her hand.

"Nay, Peggy, but you must take this; it will be cold on the shore road, and" —

"Throw it in, Bess! I'll see that she wraps herself if there's need. Good-by, child."

"Good-by, father, — be a good girl, Peggy."

"Of course I'll be a good girl, for I shall be happy, and when I'm happy I'm always good."

"Oh, that's your reading of it, is it, Miss Margot?" demanded her father, looking affectionately down at the sparkling and glowing little face upturned to his; — a face that reminded one of Teresa's, but more vivid, more mundane, more mutinous, and more combative.

"Reading of what, papa? Oh, see, there's Becca Fuller and little Molly, I wonder if Molly don't wish she were in my place and if she don't wonder where we're going. Where are we going, papa?"

"We're going to Ponds, chatterbox, and first of all to the Miss Nourses. Then I want to take you to see a little girl of your own age who is very unhappy. Her mother is dying, and I don't know where she will find a home. You can be kind to her and say something comfortable, can't you, Margot?"

"I don't like people that are unhappy, papa, nor poor people, either," replied the child decisively. "They are so shady and I like the sunshine. Let us talk French now, papa."

"But, Margot, this little girl is almost as French as you are. Your grandfather was a Frenchman, and her grandmother was a Frenchwoman, although, I dare say, they do not think as much about it as we do."

"What is her name?" inquired Margaret, tentatively, "the little girl's, I mean."

"Deborah Samson."

"Oh, that's a very ugly name, and not at all French. Now I am Marguerite LeBaron, and that is very French."

"You little monkey! Well, Deborah's grandmother was named Bathsheba LeBroche, and she was a very elegant demoiselle who came from Paris with her father when I was a boy, and married one of the Bradfords, which brings her children kin with you, my dear, since your mother was a Bradford."

"Why, Deborah Samson is the wife of that Captain Samson who used to bring me sugar-stick, and she lives in King Street now, and Tressy did n't like her — at least, she did n't want me to talk about her — did Captain Samson do anything naughty, or why did n't he come any more to bring me sugar-stick and have his dinner?"

"See those gulls, Margot! Ha, 't is a fine sight, child, look you now!"

And drawing rein on the crest of the hill just beyond Jabez' Corner, the doctor leaned forward, his elbow on his knee, drinking in the beauty of that wonderfully beautiful view.

"Look, Margot, they are at work upon the lighthouse at the Gurnet's Head. See the line like a spider's thread against the blue sky! 'T is the derrick they have set up to lift the stones to the top. And beyond, you can see the houses in Marshfield, and what a glory of color and light fills the sky, and sparkles on the sea! Learn to see Nature, and to love her, child, and you'll spare yourself many a little fret and jar. Your worricows are always short-sighted people."

"And there are one, two, oh, twenty ships coming in, papa. Some of them will be from the West Indies with fruit and sweeties for me. Perhaps one is from Barbadoes and there is a box from Tressy. When will Tressy come home, papa?"

"Your brother needs her to look after him and his little ones," replied the doctor, in a constrained voice. "See there is a brig flying your brother Goodwin's private signal! Lyddy will have another silk gown."

"She has too many now," exclaimed the child, pettishly. "She is too rustly, — I like nice soft people like Tressy and Bess. Papa, is there any ship there from France?"

"I cannot tell so far away, but prythee, little maid, why do you care so much for France, which you never saw? Come, now, if we have time, instead of going to see Deborah Samson, we will drive to Oberry, where some of the French Neutrals live, and you shall try your skill in talking French with the little lasses there."

"Oh, yes, papa, that will be fine, but how came French people in Oberry?"

"'Tis a sad story, Margot, yes, and a bad story, too. A great many years ago, much longer ago than when your grandfather came to this country, a company of emigrants from Normandy," —

"In the north of France, but we came from the south," interrupted the child.

"Ay? I am glad to know that, mademoiselle! Pray how did you find it out? But let me tell my story, and don't interrupt. It is not good manners."

"I will be *gentile*," murmured Margot, with a little grimace, and the doctor went on in a dreamy sort of voice, —

"Coming from the north, they settled in the north of this country, and named their home Acadie, because it was so fair. It is now called Nova Scotia, and some hard, cold, money-getting people from England and Scotland call it their land and their home."

"Well, papa!" —

"Oh, yes, — I was forgetting I had other company than my own. Well, dear, Acadie belonged then to France, but England wanted it, and so by purchase and by conquest it became hers. But these dear people of Acadie were not to be bought and sold like their lands, nor were they easily to be conquered, for they loved their own country, their beautiful France, and they would not even pretend to be the subjects of the enemy of France."

"Is that England, papa?"

"Yes, child. So a few years ago, an army, and one of our townsmen in command of it — was sent to drive these people out, to scatter them up and down in a land

where they knew not the customs, or the language, or the means of livelihood, their property confiscated, their families divided, only their lives left, and they, ruined."

"Oh, papa!"

"I warned you that it was a sad tale, child, and yet you should know it, for it is history. The English government ordered, and our own townsman was so unfortunate as to be obliged to carry out the mandate, that the village of Grand Pré, in the Basin of Minas in Acadie, should be depopulated, all property confiscated, and the lands revert to the British Crown. I dare say Winslow did as well as he could, but it was sorry work for an honest man. The men were captured in their church and thrust on board the war vessels, and the women and children followed, but no pains were taken to keep the families together, or to trans-ship those who were divided — surely that might have been done! The houses were burned, the herds and flocks left to die of neglect, the crops to perish on the ground" —

"Oh, papa! It seems as if it were I who was hurt."

"There speaks your French blood, Margot! Yes, to me it has always seemed as if it were I and mine who were so cruelly dealt with, and I was glad when General Winslow brought some of his captives within my reach. Seventeen of them came to the Old Colony with him, and about half that number live up here at Obery, the rest in Kingston and Marshfield."

"And you will take me to see them, dear papa?"

"Yes, if there is time after my visit to the Miss Nourses, but here we are at their door. Sit you still, till I see if I have to stay any time; or, no, you had better get out and look at the turkeys; they have a big

flock, and a peacock as well." So Margot, forgetting Acadie and its tragedy, ran and skipped after the turkeys, and picked herself a posy, and munched an apple or two, and enjoyed the crisp autumn air and the new scene, with all the volatile facility of her French nature.

CHAPTER XVII.

“WHO SALTED THIS PUDDING?”

“AND how is Miss Kezia, to-day?” inquired the doctor, as he unceremoniously walked into the kitchen of the primitive old farmhouse, thereby seriously startling a long, lank, and yellow woman of uncertain age who just then entered the room, bearing a twelve quart pan of milk in her hands.

“Land o’ Goshen, Doctor! You’ve sca’at me out of a week’s growth!” exclaimed she, setting down the milk-pan, wiping her bony hand upon a generous apron of blue and white homespun check, and then shaking hands with the added welcome of a gap-toothed smile. “How d’y do?”

“If the week’s growth would have been lateral I beg your pardon, if vertical I congratulate you, Miss Mimy. I am very well,” replied the doctor, gravely reciprocating the handshake, and smiling at one corner of his mouth. “But how is Miss Kezia?”

“Well, she ain’t a mite better, and that’s a fact. I sez to Keery only this morning, sez I, ‘Keery, I’m most afraid it’s a-going to go hard with Keezy, I am.’”

“Oh, I hope not, I hope not,” replied the doctor, kindly. “Shall I go up to see her?”

“Well, if you’ll please be seated just a minute, I’ll run up and see. Teer and Do are settin’ with her just

now. Keery and I watched. Take the roundabout, Doctor."

"Don't hurry yourself, Miss Mimy, I can wait a little," and the doctor, drawing the roundabout chair with its patchwork cushion near the fireplace, big and cavernous as those others which we have contemplated, rubbed his hands over the cheerful blaze, and murmured with a smile, "'In all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job,' — but the charm has been broken by transplantation!"

And in effect, Job Nourse, torn between a native sense of humor, and an implanted horror of such light conversation and pursuits as occupy the unconverted, had, like many of his co-religionists, found his amusement among those sacred matters which the unconverted generally respectfully let alone, and had named his three elder daughters, Jemima, Kezia, and Keren-Happuch; some years later, a brace of twin girls closed the family record, and these, Parson Leonard, then just settled in Plymouth, insisted upon naming Dorothea and Theodora, soon contracted to Do and Teer, while the first three softened into Mimy, Keezy, and Keery.

But now Job slept with his fathers, leaving his five daughters to carry on the farm by the aid of "hired help," and to prove, long before the question was ever agitated, "woman's right" to do man's work if she has capacity and opportunity, and to eat her bread in the sweat of her brow and the wear and tear of her nervous system.

"Will you be pleased to step up stairs, Doctor," said a more childish voice than Jemima's at the doctor's back, and rising with a smile he held out his hand, saying: —

"Good morning, Miss Teer. I am glad to see you looking so well!"

"Well, I'm tol'able, thank you, Doctor, but we're consid'able worried over Keezy. She don't seem to gain none."

"Let us see, let us see, my dear," replied the doctor, vaguely, as he obeyed the summons.

A little half hour later he returned, followed by Keery, or Keren-Happuch, the longest, leanest, and yellowest of the five sisters.

"I will wait for a while and watch the effect of the draught I have just given," said he gravely. "If that does not do, I shall try something stronger."

"And anyway you'll stop over dinner, won't you, Doctor? Of course you will, though we know our livin' is n't like what you get down town to Squire Lothrop's, and Mr. Elkanah Watson's, and them folks, not to mention your own, which I'm sure is just as good as any one's or was in your wife's time, the first one I mean, she that was a Bartlett, and the Bartletts was always famous for good living" —

"I'll stay with much pleasure, Miss Keery, but I don't suppose you could give my little girl anything. You never have symbols up here at Ponds, do you?"

"Why, of course we have simballs, Doctor LeBaron, — well, there now, ain't I a chowder-head, not to see that you was only poking fun at me. Yes, indeed, we'll find a simball for the little girl, and some dinner too. Which of 'em is it, Doctor? Little Teresy?"

"No," — and a tone of pain struck through the doctor's cheery voice, "there's only one to be called little now, and that is Margaret, the youngest. I left her out there looking after the turkeys."

"Land sake! I hope that old gobbler won't run at her! He takes a notion to fight children once in a while."

"He'd better not try to fight Margot, she'd make short work of him," laughed the doctor. "But I'll go and look after her and the horse."

"Let me go, Doctor; I'd like to show the little girl my posy bed, and things, and I'll holler to Jabez to put up your horse. You set right down to the fire and wait. Guess I'll salt that pudding 'fore I go out."

And swinging forward the crane Keren-Happuch peered into a kettle hanging from it, stirred the contents vigorously with a flattened stick left boiling in it, threw in a small handful of salt from a cloth bag suspended in the chimney-corner, and replacing the cover so far as the stick would allow, swung the kettle back to its temperate corner, and went out. Hardly had the door closed behind her than another opened to admit Jemima, who came in rolling down her sleeves, and wearing the half smile of conscious deserving.

"There, I've done out thirty pound of butter this morning 'sides all my tearing round after that chore boy who never does a thing without I'm at his heels. Be your folks going to want a kag o' butter this Fall, Doctor?"

"Oh yes, that was one thing my Bess told me to remember this morning, and I believe she wants some fresh butter to-day, if you have some not salted."

"Now that's too bad. I have n't got a mite of butter in the house but what's salted, but I'll churn again in three days time if I live, and I'll set out four or five pounds for you before I go anigh the salt-bag, though how you can like that mis'able brashy stuff I don't see. Why even the Bible says 'salt is good,' and you're a Bible Christian I know, Doctor."

But the doctor did not reply, his whole attention be-

ing concentrated on a psychological phenomenon, enacted before him. When Jemima spoke of the salt-bag, her eyes traveled toward it, and as she expatiated upon the virtues of salt, her feet automatically followed her eyes, and, her hand groping for the mouth of the bag and seizing a portion of the salt, she finished by throwing it into the mush-kettle, and vigorously stirring the contents, while her poor faded eyes fastened upon the doctor's face, eagerly demanding assent to her last proposition. It was a delightful instance of a dual action of the brain, and interested the doctor exceedingly.

“Keery! Keery! I want you a minute!” called a voice from up stairs, and Miss Mimy, hastily swinging back the mush-kettle, hastened to obey the summons. A whispered colloquy ensued, and through the half-open door Theodora and Dorothea slid into the room, their arms entwined in that girlish *abandon* so attractive in maidens of forty or thereabout.

“O Doctor, we're so glad you are going to stay to dinner, though we haven't anything but very common doings, to-day,” — began Do.

“I don't know as we have any day,” added Teer, in a giggle, and then both giggled, for one of the charms of these twins was, that whatever one did the other also did, the reason probably that neither ever married, since the law forbids two women, although twins, to marry one man.

“I hope the pudding has n't got burned,” chirruped Teer, running toward the fire.

“Oh, I hope not!” echoed Do, running after her and pressing close to her sister's side as she drew out the kettle and peered into it.

“No, I guess not, it stirs free,” answered Teer, plunging her hand into the salt-bag, “I'll salt it!”

"Let me salt it, too," cried Do. "You take half a handful, and I'll take half a handful, and both of us fling it in together!" And with much girlish demonstration, both of their affection for each other, and their infantile condition of artlessness, the twins each took a small handful of salt out of the bag, and stirred it into the pudding.

"Oh, Do!" cried Teer, with a little skip of ecstasy, as they stepped back from the fireplace, "there is a dear, sweet little girl coming up from the barn with Keery! *Is she yours, Doctor?*"

"Yes, a little playfellow for you girls," replied the doctor, dryly. But the twins, without stopping to appreciate the sarcasm, if indeed they could, were tripping each other up, in eagerness to reach and caress Margaret, who, truth to tell, received their advances rather disdainfully.

Left alone at the fireside, Doctor LeBaron allowed himself a very peculiar liberty, and that, with a smile much wider than he generally enjoyed; drawing forward the crane as he had seen the others do, he took off the lid, grasped a good handful of salt from the open mouth of the bag, stirred it in, replaced the lid, and swung the kettle back, just as the twins with Keery and Margaret tripped through the open door with much shrill laughter and exclamation.

They found the doctor leaning back in the round-about chair, his chin resting in his hand, his eyes meditatively fixed on the fire.

"Your dear pa looks tired, Magaretta," murmured Teer, in a stage aside. "Go and give him a kiss, I guess that's what he wants."

"Oh, Teer!" giggled Do, with her hands pressed

upon her mouth, as if to subdue immoderate mirth. "Ain't you ashamed?"

"I sh'd think you might both of you be ashamed to some purpose," growled Keren-Happuch, who, having been called upon to "mother" the twins, some twenty years before, had not noticed that they were now old enough to mother Margaret. "Go and set that table, and don't act like fools."

Somewhat subdued by this reproof, the babes obeyed, and in a short time dinner was upon the table. It consisted of two dishes literally, for the *pièce de resistance*, universally known as "b'iled dinner," was all heaped upon a huge pewter platter, worth to-day more dollars than the Miss Nourses ever saw at one time.

It consisted of a large piece of corned, or rather salted, beef, another of salt pork, a cabbage, plenty of turnips arranged in a wreath around the edge of the platter, some dumplings of rye meal, and a few carrots gracefully garnishing the apex of the mound. A mighty steam, full of flavor and odor, arose from the dish, and Margot, wrinkling her delicate little nose, whispered in French to her father, —

"It's not nice, I don't want any!"

"Bad manners, and bad French, Margot," replied the doctor in the same tone, while the twins, who, laughing vociferously, had retired to the back kitchen or sink-room, as it was called, carrying the mush-kettle between them, returned, Do bearing a huge wooden bowl full of golden "nasty-pudding," and Teer, a brown stone pitcher of buttermilk. These were placed at the other end of the table from the pewter platter of b'iled dinner, while a smaller pewter plate of cold bannocks, that is, a thin cake of rye and Indian meal, baked in a creeper

over the coals, was put down anywhere, and Jemima emphatically placing another stone pitcher of cider beside the milk, briefly said, —

“Set up to your victuals, folks! Doctor, you sit in father’s place, poor man, and, sis, you come up here, by me.”

“I’d rather sit by papa,” replied Margot, her eyes flashing at the address, and the doctor hastened to say, —

“Yes, Miss Mimy, she’s a naughty girl, sometimes, and I have to keep her ears within reach.”

“Oh, sho, I don’t believe that! Well, set up, set up. Teer, you can eat now, and then go up and stay with Keezy while Keery comes down.”

“I’ll have to go, too,” interposed Do, childishly.

“Well, I guess you’ll have to stay down for once and help me wait on the table; the doctor and little miss ain’t used to roughing it, same as we are,” said Jemima, a little tartly, for something in Margot’s manner and expression had come near her New England pride, perhaps the most sensitive of any in the world.

The doctor’s quick tact perceived the little annoyance, and as he passed the plates, rapidly loaded by the hostess with a portion of everything heaped upon the great platter, he so seasoned the coarse fare with jest and anecdote, and little flatteries and attentions, that Miss Mimy’s long yellow face was soon broadened by a series of smiles, genially overlapping each other, and her raspy voice completely lost its edge, while the twins simpered and laughed and said, “Oh my!” so constantly, that when Jemima directed, —

“Now, Do, take off the b’iled vittles, and let’s have the pudding genteel by itself,” poor Do had hardly eaten anything at all.

"When we have a sweet pudding and sa'ace, Doctor, we have it in the new-fashioned way, before the meat," explained Jemima, wiping away the tears of laughter, "but just hasty-pudding so, we don't mind, and eat it right along any time. I'm real mortified I did n't have nothing fit to eat to-day, but I did n't know as you'd come 'fore noon, and Keezy needing so much care, I guess I've got kind o' slack, but help yourself to some pud'n now, and give Marg'et some. Do you like butter-milk along with it, or melasses? It ain't no use pretending, though, for fact is we ain't got no melasses to-day; we got clean run out of 'em before I knew it, and — Land o' Goshen! What's got into this pudding! Why, I know I salted it, but — good Lord! Twins, did you salt it too?"

"Why, yes, we both salted it!" cried the twins, choking with pudding and laughter, and Keery, who, driven by famine, had come down to look after her dinner, stood at the door staring, and exclaiming —

"Ain't the pudding salted? Why, I'm sure I salted it, handsome?"

"And I salted it," quietly remarked the doctor; "I saw that everybody else did, and I thought it was the custom of the house. Is it too salt?"

"Well, you just take a taste, and see, Doctor Le-Baron," said Jemima, half inclined to be offended, but concluding to laugh, and all the more that Keren-Happuch couldn't see the joke, and insisted upon having it explained.

"Well, there's the simballs, anyway!" exclaimed she, at length. "Maybe they'll go good enough with a piece of cheese and some cider, though I was laying out to wrop 'em up and give 'em to sis to eat going home. Children are always hungry."

"So am I, — for your 'simballs,' " said the doctor in a plaintive voice, which made them all laugh again, while Mimy going into the butt'ry presently returned with a great piece of cheese and a plate of those fried cakes which we call dough-nuts, and which once were called symbols, because they were the survival of certain ecclesiastical dainties known in old Saxon days as Mary's cakes, cross-buns, and various emblematic forms, supposed to show a devotional intention, or to protect the eater from poison, or the evil eye. Miss Mimy's mind had never been burdened with folk-lore of this sort, and she did not even know that simballs stood for symbols, but she cut her dough into stars, and triangles, and five-fingers, and globes, just as her Saxon ancestors had done before her, and very savory and toothsome they were. The doctor ate heartily, and praised loudly, and even Margot deigned to take a second and a third, and to drink a mug of the sweet buttermilk, until wiping his lips and rising from the table, her father said, —

"And now I will step up and see Miss Kezia again, and then we must go, for I have other visits to pay. Miss Mimy, you don't mind my salting the pudding, do you? It was quite spoiled before I touched it, you know."

"Lor' sakes, no, doctor! It's worth a dozen kittles of hasty pudding to hear you talk and tell, for an hour or so."

Miss Kezia was really better, and as the doctor, promising to come again on the morrow, went out to his chaise, with Margot by his side, Jemima, Keren-Happuch, Dorothea, and Theodora followed them to the door and stood, a long, lean, yellow, but smiling group upon the doorstep.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN ACADIAN PRIVATEER.

CAPTAIN SIMEON SAMSON was in evil case, and the grounds of his misfortunes were more lofty than his private fortunes.

France and England still were quarreling over Canada, and, especially, trying to decide the precise boundary lines of Acadia, which had indeed been settled by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, but very much after the fashion in which a big boy gives his jack-knife to his little brother, "if he can get it!"

Not that Mad. De Pompadour, or whatever favorite governed France at the moment, ever compelled Louis XV. to absolutely repudiate his share of the treaty; but when the line was to be drawn between the ceded and the retained territory, France claimed that Acadia only meant the southern half of the peninsula, now called Nova Scotia, while England indignantly contended that it meant everything east of a line drawn from the mouth of the Kennebec to Quebec, a very important difference, as the English claim included the southern bank of the St. Lawrence with the commanding headland of Gaspé at its mouth. So there was war in the land, and the Acadians, the most unreasonably loyal people in history, fought desperately on the side of France, — who coldly repudiated and sold them, — against England who, partly for humanity's sake, and

partly because she saw in them valuable citizens, and wanted them to stay quietly and raise crops, and catch fish, and make cider to be sold to the Army commissaries, offered them all sorts of liberal terms and privileges, including protection in their religion, very obnoxious to the English nostrils under the Hanoverian reign.

But the Acadians were simple folk, and knew but one form of loyalty; so through a forty years' probation, and a succession of mild and generous governors, each one of whom felt that he was the man to settle the Acadian question and found that he was n't, the French Neutrals, as they came to be called, had but one answer to give to every form of argument or entreaty. They knew no sovereign but the King of France, and although they would take oath never to fight either for or against him, they would die before swearing unconditional allegiance to England, with the risk of being called upon to serve against their own countrymen.

This was their simple confession of faith, and it never once varied in spirit, and not much in word, through forty years of incessant endeavor upon the part of England to induce a recantation.

One must respect faith so staunch, and loyalty so unswerving, but yet what power could consent to entertain some eight or ten thousand "Neutrals" with a hereditary attachment to its mortal enemy, within its borders? Sound policy dictated that the Acadians must be assimilated or banished; the former course they resisted with a bland obstinacy infinitely irritating to the English governors, and at last the latter course was resolved on by Pitt at home, and carried out by Gov. Lawrence upon the spot, through men of the New England contingent, which he had summoned to his aid.

Unfortunately, Lieutenant-colonel John Winslow was the man ordered to deport the inhabitants of the Basin of Minas, and being a soldier he must obey his orders, or resign his position. Perhaps he might have done his duty more gently and shown himself more careful of the domestic interests and affections of those he made his prisoners. Perhaps — but how few men find the wisest and best method of performing a painful and distracting duty, and how few agents of an odious act receive justice at the hands of posterity !

It is comfortable to know, however, that although the exiles were scattered all down the Atlantic coast, from Massachusetts to Florida, they were allowed to retain their money and household goods, and so soon as they were steady upon their legs in the new home, began preparations to return to the old one. Before two months were over, many had done so, and in course of time, about two thirds of the whole number deported had, with the serene persistence of their character, found means to again become Acadians of Acadia, and so long as they were unobtrusive were not disturbed. Evangeline and Gabriel did not find their way back, to be sure, and the great poet's song of their lives and their death is sweeter and more pathetic than history. But yet to my mind there is something far nobler in the spectacle of a people stoutly choosing loss, exile, and great suffering in preference to disloyalty, than in the poet's picture of childlike endurance of unmerited wrong, whose origin cannot be guessed. I would write,

“*Dulce et decorum est, pro patria mori,*”

upon a monument set in the fields of Grand Pré, rather than,

"Daily injustice is done, and might is the right of the strongest."

But Governor Lawrence and his subordinates had not been able to capture all the Acadians, and, as we have said, very many of the exiles returned as soon as possible to their old homes, and having been stirred beyond their original passive opposition became active antagonists, collecting at various points, notably the Bay of Chaleur (so named by Jacques Cartier because he happened to sail into it first upon a hot summer day), Chénecto Bay, Miramichi, and Richibucto, where they occupied themselves in fitting out small privateers, and organizing, with the help of the Indians, surprise parties to cut off supplies from the English posts, to harry the English settlements and to give all the information and aid possible to the French forces.

One of the most formidable of these privateers, commanded by the notorious Joseph Brossard, cruising in the Bay of Fundy, fell in, one pleasant morning, with the brigantine Lydia out of Plymouth, laden with supplies of various sorts for the fort at the mouth of the St. John, then called by the French Fort Royal, and now by the English, Fort Frederick.

The Lydia could neither fight nor fly, and having vainly tried the latter course, was compelled, much to the chagrin of her young commander, to surrender. Brossard did not spare him the humiliation of the defeat, especially when he heard his destination.

"St. John! St. John!" exclaimed he, in the *patois* used by the habitants as English. "Kennel of dogs! Some day we will revenge the slaughter your Monckton made of us not five years ago there. Some other Circe will be found, and some other Ulysses will be wrecked."

"Don't know what all that means," remarked Sim-eon Samson gruffly, as he eyed the tumultuous proceedings of the prize crew getting the *Lydia* under sail to follow her captor.

"What! Do not you know that these dogs of Englishmen captured one hundred and fifty French habitants, free Acadians, subjects of our most glorious king, and put them on board the *Circe* to carry into exile like those others, and the brave fellows rose, and seized the vessel and carried her into what you call St. John, and made captive the crew, and later, when your men came to recapture her, we burned her before their eyes, and when your Monckton arrived, and after slaughtering all its defenders recaptured the fort, his schooner *Ulysses* went upon the rocks and was wrecked. That, my lad, is what happens to all who try to take Fort Royal, or to aid and provision it."

"Oh, well, we won't fight with our tongues since we can't with our guns," said Samson, rather contemptuously. "What are you going to do with me?"

"I will take you and your supplies to our brave men in Baie Chaleur," replied Brossard, complacently. "The supplies we will consume, and the brigantine must be ransomed by its owners, and you shall be prisoner until the ransom money comes, you and the ship's papers."

"Good Lord!" groaned Samson. It may be months, may be a year, and maybe Goodwin and Warren won't think I'm worth a ransom."

"Yes, yes, a brave young fellow like you is worth much money to his owners," said Brossard, running his eye over the fine proportions, resolute face, and dauntless bearing of his captive.

"The brigantine shall be sent home with a few hands.

and you shall write to your owners and your friends — you have a wife ? ”

“ Yes, what ’s that to you ? ”

“ Oh, she will go and plead to these owners ; she is young, she is beautiful, she still loves you ” —

“ There, that will do, Brossard. We Englishmen don’t hide behind our wives’ petticoats, nor do we talk about them to every master of a picaroon that we may come across. I will write to my owners, Goodwin and Warren, of Plymouth in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay ” —

“ Plymouth — Plymouth ! That is where Jean Daudin, and Père Bèrgeron, and Simon Martin are exiled. They wrote a letter to my beau-fils Alexander Brossard.”

“ Yes, I heard there were some French Neutrals billeted on Plymouth,” said Samson carelessly, “ but I never saw any of them.”

“ Tell me then what sort of hole is this Plymouth, and how my brothers are treated by your dogs of English.”

“ Come, man, I ’m your prisoner, and all the laws of nations say that it’s for you to keep a civil tongue in your head, and treat me pretty much as you ’d fancy me to treat you, if we took turn about. Know what I mean, commander ? ”

“ Yes, I know what you mean. You ’re a bold fellow and your owners will pay the ransom quick, quick ! ”

“ Well, then, don’t forget it, and I’ll spin you a yarn about Plymouth, and you can tell me what ’s the matter with you folks up here, and what maggot’s got into your brains that you don’t want to be Englishmen.”

So accepting his situation as “ the fortune of war,”

and making the best of it, Samson filled his pipe, quaffed a mug of his host's heady cider, and settled himself for one of those sailor's "yarns" of which, truth to tell, he was remarkably fond. So agreeable, in truth, did he make himself, that when, some four days later, Brossard dropped anchor in Baie Chaleur and prepared to set his prisoner ashore, he would have embraced him, had not the Englishman held him off by main force, shaking hands instead and saying,

"No, no, mate, I don't kiss tarry-breeks nor whiskers, though I wish you just as well as if I did."

"Nay, but you have stolen my heart, Samson! You have done me wrong, for I never can hate an Englishman, again."

"No, but you'll spite them just the same," replied Samson, coolly. "A man of your years is n't made over as easily as all that."

"But you are unkind, my Samson," expostulated Brossard, "and yet, that shall not hinder my making the best arrangements possible for your captivity. My friend Gaspard Brunel has charge of the fort, and I shall charge him to give you of the best we find in your Lydia's stores, to eat and to drink."

"I won't touch bit nor sup of stolen goods," interrupted Samson stoutly. "If I'm a prisoner of war I'm entitled to rations, but let them look out not to feed me on the Lyddy's stores or I'll brain the turnkey."

CHAPTER XIX.

SAMSON IN PETTICOATS.

“FOUR weeks! Four lifetimes! Four more, and I shall be a madman and go from here to Bedlam!”

“What is that you say, dear friend! Still you complain of your captivity, and you have the pipe, and the wine, and the books, and the paper and pen and ink, — and your poor little friend, Thérèse, so often as she can come to chat with you!”

The young man thus addressed turned from the window where he had been shaking the stout iron bars that his namesake could have broken like straws, and approached the table where a remarkably pretty young girl was laying out a supper very luxurious for prison fare.

“I know you have been very good to me, Thérèse,” said he kindly, if a little coldly, “but my case is beyond cure of dainty food, or books, or even pleasant chat. I want my liberty, Thérèse. I want to be afloat and bound home. I want to be playing a man’s part in the world, and not losing strength and energy cooped up here like a fowl to be fattened.”

He clenched his right hand as he spoke and shot it out as if to try the muscles, then impatiently nipped a little superfluous flesh upon the fore-arm.

“Yes, I’ll be fit to kill and eat in another month, — or I’ll kill somebody else or myself or — there, child,

don't stand and look as if the devil had broke loose in your sight. I would never hurt you, little one, though you alone stood in the way of my freedom."

"No, mon capitan, I do not fear you," said the girl, simply; "but I am so sorry, I want to help you."

"Good child — but you cannot," said the prisoner absently, and rather indifferently.

"Will not you come and eat, monsieur? Here is an *omelette aux fines herbes* which I made myself, and it will spoil."

"Four weeks — and it may be ten or twenty, or forever!"

The girl stood for a moment watching, as the prisoner strode up and down the cell, teeth and fists clenched, and the haggard look she had marked of late, dark upon his face; a face to please that maiden queen who "loved to look upon a man" although no face for an artist, with its irregular Saxon outline and strong fair hair brushed back and gathered in a cue at the nape of the neck, its choleric complexion, and bright, blue eyes, darkened by shaggy brows, and occasionally, in time of peace, reminding one of those marvelous eyes bequeathed to her descendants by Barbara Standish; a generous mouth filled with strong white teeth and a square cleft chin made up this face set upon a thick short neck and massive shoulders, and as Thérèse Brunel's dark eyes rested upon it now in its moment of despair her heart melted within her for love and longing.

"Mon capitan," said she, softly gliding to his side as he stopped at the window and seized its bars and shook them again, with a savage growl. "Mon capitan, listen!"

"Nay, leave me, child, leave me before I scare you again. I'm in no mood for gentle talk and — oh my God, my God!" And the poor fellow leaned his hot head upon his arms there in the narrow porthole, and groaned aloud.

"I will help you to escape, mon capitain," whispered the girl, laying a timid hand upon his shoulder.

"What! No, but you cannot, dear child! You have told me how your father guards the keys, and Jacques will be here in a moment to call you out."

"No, but there are other ways — I have been thinking much — only take courage, mon ami, take courage, and eat and grow strong, and no longer waste yourself in shaking those bars — you shall, you shall be free, — I promise it!"

"And you're not just humoring me to my food, like a spoiled child?"

"I swear to you, mon capitain, no!"

"Well, then, I'll eat and sleep and all the rest of it. But take care you don't try to cheat me for my own good, Thérèse!"

"You shall be free, mon capitain, if I die to set you free."

Samson stood for a moment reading the face upturned to his, but the look of passionate devotion glowing in the dark eyes and trembling upon the lips, ripe and red as a cherry, was not to be mistaken, and partly in gratitude, partly in the frank fashion of his time and avocation, the sailor stooped and pressed a kiss upon those willing lips.

And yet he would have known better than to light his pipe in a powder magazine! Then he sat down and ate the *omelette aux fines herbes* and the rest of the

dainty little supper ; and Thérèse, hardly speaking again, for the tumult in her veins choked her, went her way and left Jacques the turnkey to bring away the supper she bribed him with smiles and dainty bits to allow her to serve.

The days winged by hope passed on, and Samson, caring for his health, repaired the damage it had sustained and gained once more the color to his cheek and light to his eye whose loss had so wounded the heart of the gentle *habitane*.

About a week had passed when one evening she came again to bring the prisoner's food, an office she did not dare to perform except when her father was away, for mother the poor child had none, and, as she set it out, looked at him with a sort of wistful appeal in her eyes, red with recent tears. An intuition shot through the captain's brain.

"Thérèse, you have news !" exclaimed he, seizing her arm.

"Yes, mon capitain. All is prepared, and to-night, even to-night, we will fly."

"We !"

"Oh, monsieur, you will not leave me behind when it is all for love of you that I play the traitor to my people and to my father who trusts me."

"Oh, my God ! Is it all to fail at last ?" groaned the man, dropping his hand and turning ashen white to his lips.

"Fail ! But no, all is prepared."

"And do you think I am such a cur, Thérèse, as to leave you to suffer in my place, or such a villain as to take you ? No, if my liberty hangs on either of these pegs, it is over — gone — past."

“ But listen, mon ami — I love you so dearly ” —

“ Chut, chut, child — hold thy tongue ! No woman named Thérèse should be — well, I ’ll not chide thee, poor little one ; but have I never told you that I am a married man ? ”

“ Yes, mon capitain.”

“ Well, then, — I gave up so much once to hold myself to a promise, and after all but a half-promise, that it is not likely I shall prove false for a less temptation. If you cannot help me off without hurt to yourself, let it go. Some day, before I am quite worn out with waiting, they will send the ransom, or I will get away without help — nay, girl, don’t cry — I never could see a woman cry without a pang, like a sword-thrust — don’t cry, little one — I ’d kiss away the tears, only I must not — there, go away for a while, Thérèse — Thérèse — to think of a maid calling herself Thérèse, offering me love that I must not take — a Thérèse that I might take in my arms and kiss — oh, child, you drive me out of my manhood — go, go ! ”

“ Your wife is called Thérèse ? ” demanded the French girl.

“ My wife — no.”

“ Ah, then, you do love some other woman more than you do her ! Some woman called Thérèse, so why not me ? ”

“ Nay, child,” —

“ You cannot deny it, monsieur.”

“ Well, then, since you will have the whole story, though I count it something less than maidenly to so press a man, I will tell you that I did love, or at the least went nigh to love one called Terese, but my faith was due to another, and she claimed it, and I gave it to

her, and a right down good woman and good wife she is, and if I gave up much to hold faith with her before we were married, I would do twice as much now, and I care not to talk more about it, so even though you find me rude and boorish I will say that it were better you left me and came no more to see me. A man is but flesh and blood, and it is not my nature to be so ungracious."

"See, then, mon capitan, I will be as brave and as self-forgetting as you! You shall be free and leave me behind."

"To take the blame, and mayhap the punishment of my escape — no!"

"I shall see — I shall see," and Thérèse meditated, a forefinger laid upon her pretty slighted lips. Her first words, however, seemed little to the purpose, and were very coldly spoken.

"I think you mistook me but now, monsieur. I did propose to escape with you and go to your town of Plymouth, but it was to go under your protection to my uncle Bèrgeron, who with his daughter Alix and his son Pierre is planted there."

"What, your uncle and cousins are among those French Neutrals late sent to Plymouth! Why did you never tell me that before?"

"Why should I?" replied the girl sullenly. "What care have you for me or my affairs."

"Come, now, my lass, that's bad seamanship to tack and fill and yaw about in that style, when you can lay a fair course on an even keel. Just now you loved me more than I could hearken to, and again you go nigh to hate me, and yet Simeon Samson has never changed from what you first knew him. See here, little Thérèse,

you are but a child and know not what you want. If — if — hang it, girl, a man cannot talk to a maid as her mother might, but I have always noted that when one gets by hook or by crook what he ought n't to have, the good of it is gone before he touches it, and it's worse to have it than to want it. Then, as for taking you to your uncle in Plymouth, it's a thing I've no commission to do. Your father trusts you to come in here, and he's a good father to you in all ways, so far as I have heard, and for me to steal you away, though no further harm come of it, would be just piracy, kidnapping, or any such name he chose to put to it. And no matter how circumspect I might be, my wife would feel she had a right of protest and she'd use it too. You would n't like me to have my ears pulled, would you, little girl?"

Thérèse laughed in spite of herself, and peeped out of her apron at the stalwart fellow, who smiled cheerily at her.

"Come, now, that's my lass! Laugh and be friends, and forget all the nonsense you've been trying to make me take for earnest. Help me off if you can, and if ever you come to join your kin in Plymouth, Deborah Samson will show you what thankfulness means. She's a good woman, is Deborah, and you would be glad to give her such pleasure as she will have when she sees me safe home again."

"One word, monsieur," and the French girl, no longer weeping but pale and cold, dropped her apron, and looked straight in the face of this masculine blunderer. "I will help you all I possibly can, and I will forgive you when I can" —

"Forgive me for what!"

“For — the trouble you have given me, monsieur — I have cooked many dishes and done — ah, ciel, you *man*! Well, I forgive you as one forgives petit Jean, the imbecile, for what he says amiss; but I pray you spare me the embraces of Madame Samson! I have not the honor to know her, and I have not the time to listen to her perfections. Let us say no more about her.”

“I take no favors from one who scorns at my wife,” said Samson, stoutly.

“And still in your heart you love some Thérèse better than you do her!”

The healthy color fell from beneath the bronze of the sailor's cheek, leaving it of a sickly yellow, and he turned again to the window, grasping the bars with his hands and staring vacantly at the broad stretch of blue water and rosy evening sky before him. For a moment there was intense silence in the narrow cell, and then a faint rustle, a hand timidly laid upon the tense arm, and a whisper: —

“Oh, pardon, pardon, mon capitain! I would not have said it, but my heart is breaking with its misery!”

“You hurt me sorely, child, but you could not have meant it. You would not wantonly stab at a poor fellow who trusted you in his lonely and helpless estate!”

“Oh, miserable that I am — oh, Judas — oh, demon — how dare I ever say my prayers again, how dare I look at you, how dare I even ask for your forgiveness!”

“Come, come, my girl, it needs not all this to gain the pardon I never withheld. Thérèse, you are like a craft in a heavy sea with no steerage way upon her —

she rolls to port, she rolls to lu'ard, and at every roll she snaps a yard, or her standing rigging, and finally her masts, and lies a wreck, all for want of a rudder."

"And you will forgive me?" sobbed the girl, quite uncomprehensive of the nautical parable.

"As freely as I pray God to forgive me my own far blacker sins."

"And you shall escape, you and the man they brought with you."

"Mark Pryor! Can you help him off as well?" exclaimed Samson joyfully. "Right glad shall I be to carry him safe home to Duxbury, and his old mother."

"Yes, you will need his help in the boat, or I should not have troubled," said Thérèse, carelessly. "You shall be dressed as a woman in some clothes I have made for you from those of my dear dead mother — heaven grant it be not counted sacrilege, and he shall be a boatman from Miramichi whose boat is here for a day or two" —

"I a woman!" exclaimed Samson, irresolutely. "But if it comes to fighting what can I do, hampered in petticoats!"

"You will not fight — you will run," replied Thérèse, briefly.

"Then give me a following wind, for I never learned to hand or reef a petticoat, and first should find myself in stays, and then in irons."

"You are very merry, monsieur, but I am too ignorant to comprehend."

"'T is heartless enough I know, but when you talk to a sailor-man in prison, of a boat, and a messmate, and liberty, why, child, you make a fool of him. But come, now, tell me all your plan, and how we are to compass it."

"There is a man here from Miramichi, monsieur, called Victor Beaubien!"

"Nay, not so solemn, little one! Show me that pretty smile and those white teeth as you used!"

"Think of Madame Debórah, monsieur," muttered the girl, and the queer French pronunciation of the familiar name so tickled the sailor's simple humor that it was only by a savage nip upon his nether lip that he restrained a burst of laughter sure to provoke his companion, who, taking his silence for wounded feeling, went on more placably.

"Victor and my father are concerned in affairs, oh, such secret affairs, mon capitan, matters of the war and of the king, — what they are I do not know, but they must go to-morrow to Bartibogue to meet some deputies, and they will be gone all night!" —

"And Victor leaves his boat here?"

"Yes, mon capitan, — and I was so glad."

"And will be glad again when you think of it, in days to come, Thérèse. How large a boat is it? Can two men handle it?"

"Three brought it here to Caraquette, from Miramichi, through Miscou Gully and shoals, and surely two Englishers are better than three poor Frenchmen."

"Of course they are," answered Samson, simply. "And what course should we lay to escape recapture?"

"The talk to-day was of a fleet of English war vessels off the mouth of Baie Chaleur, that's our sea, you know" —

And the girl, with a broad sweep of the hand, indicated the darkening waters without.

"And these vessels were to the eastward?"

"Yes, that way. They may be going up the St. Lawrence, our men say, but there are many of them, and you will know how to run after them. This man, Pryor, you call him, eh?"

"Well, Pryor is the way to pronounce it."

"What matter! He will be Victor Beaubien with a hat and coat such as our men wear, and you in the clothes I have fashioned, and a so-large hood on your head, you will be his sister or his mother" —

And the poor little broken-hearted French girl, laughed merrily in the blessed elasticity of her age and nationality.

"Thérèse, Thérèse, where are you, ma sœur? Papa wants you, Thérèse!"

"It is my little brother, monsieur!" exclaimed the girl, hurriedly, "I will tell you the rest to-morrow, when they are gone."

CHAPTER XX.

PHILIP DE MONTARNAUD.

THE selectmen of Plymouth were assembled in council at the Town House, on Town Square. In those days when Framing Green boasted no worthier edifice than the Town Pound, it was the Court House as well, and from it offenders were summarily dispatched to the Province prison, on the corner of Market and Summer Streets, where also were to be found the stocks and pillory maintained as a terror to evil doers but seldom used.

The fathers of Plymouth having transacted a little formal business, had somewhat relaxed the official severity of the meeting, and were discussing the aspect of the war and the prospects of a real as well as nominal peace.

“Lieutenant de Montarnaud has letters touching his exchange, from Paris,” said Doctor LeBaron; “and he tells me that there is the speediest prospect of an amicable arrangement between the Home Government and France. He is sanguine of an almost immediate peace.”

“That young man seems quite one of your family, Doctor,” remarked Deacon Foster, sourly.

“Yes, when the town requested me to take charge of him, I understood that I was to regard him as an inmate, and not as a prisoner.”

"Most surely, Doctor," interposed Warren, "we are bound to retain him and the other officers, one of whom is inmate of my own family, and one of Mr. Howland's, as hostages for the safe return of Captain Samson and our other townsmen, but there is no need of any harsh captivity" —

The door suddenly opened, and a handsome young woman entered, not with the timid hesitation usual with one of her sex intruding upon a conclave of her natural sovereigns, but with a certain steady determination of mien, the appropriate air of the victor.

"Mistress Samson!" exclaimed Deacon Fuller, the oldest man in the room, and in his own idea invested with some sort of ecclesiastical authority. "What do you want here, madam? This is no place for you."

"I ask your pardon, Deacon Fuller, but I am here to speak to you and to these gentlemen who have the care of the town, and of us women as well as the men."

"Certainly, certainly, Mrs. Samson," said Doctor LeBaron, with a punctilious politeness, that seemed to rebuke the rudeness of the first speaker, while Warren placed a chair, saying gently —

"Sit down, madam, sit down!"

"I am beholden to you, sir," replied Deborah, resting her hand on the back of the chair. "But I am not here for my own ease or pleasure, and I only ask leave to speak, and have a fair hearing."

"That we assure you, Mrs. Samson; am I not right, brethren?" And as the doctor looked around the board, he was met with an assenting murmur.

"Then, what I have to say is this. My husband, Simeon Samson, master of your vessel, Mr. Warren, is your townsman, is he not?"

“Certainly, and a very respectable and worthy one, as well as a most admirable seaman,” replied Warren, with his customary gentle courtesy.

“You say what everybody who knows him must say,” replied Deborah, with a flush of pride upon her dark face.

“Well, sirs, this man is locked fast in a miserable prison cell, where he is shut away from the life he loves so well, air, exercise, work or play, where he sees none but the faces of enemies, and hears naught but what they choose to tell him. You know this, Mr. Warren, as well as I, for I showed you the letter he writ from that prison.”

“Yes, Mrs. Samson,” replied Warren, uneasily, “and Mr. Goodwin and I began at once to collect his ransom, but times are hard, and ” —

“Not his ransom, but the ransom of the Lyddy,” interrupted Deborah. “If the Frenchman had kept the brigantine and sent home the man, I warrant times would have been found easier.”

“Nay, madam, you are unjust ” — began Warren.

“And if to upbraid Master Warren is all your object, mistress,” interposed Deacon Fuller, sourly, “you could find him in private, without coming here to interrupt the public business.”

“I do not wish to upbraid Master Warren,” replied Deborah, coolly. “He is a good man and a civil one, and if he looks at his own side of a bargain, before he does that of the other man, I know not that he differs from you, Deacon, or from most men.”

A suppressed smile stole over the faces of the selectmen, for Deacon Fuller had the reputation of being a little “near ” in business matters.

“No, I came here to see the selectmen of Plymouth, and to ask them if they think it fair or honest, or even decent, while their own townsman, taken prisoner in the service of one of their own number, lies close in prison, to leave three of his enemies at large, although they are called prisoners.”

The selectmen stirred in their chairs, and glanced at each other.

It was quite true that the three French officers billeted upon Plymouth by the Provincial Government had been treated rather as honored guests than as prisoners, and made welcome to every house in the village, especially by Doctor LeBaron, and Parson Robbins, whose liberal education included a thorough knowledge of the French language and literature. That worthy man had indeed suffered many qualms of conscience as to the lawfulness of so much mundane enjoyment as he found in those evenings when the three officers, LeBaron, and himself, closeted in the doctor's office, with a pipe and modest glass of punch before each comrade, chattered in French, of men and manners beyond the sea, and of the great world outside of his own sphere. Some solace to be sure, was derived from the fact that two of these men belonged to old Huguenot families, and that the third, Lieutenant Philip de Montarnaud, listened so courteously and intently to his own expositions of the errors of Rome, that the ardent Calvinist had good hope of soon converting him from the errors of his ways. But when at times he expressed this hope to Dr. LeBaron, that gentleman generally replied by offering him his snuff-box.

“These officers are prisoners of war, are they not?” inquired Deborah, at last, since no one broke the uneasy silence.

"Oh, yes, they are prisoners of war," replied Warren, at whom she looked.

"Then I demand, as Simeon Samson's wife, that they should be treated as he is treated. I demand that they shall be locked up in the Province prison, and fed on prison fare, and kept in close ward, until Captain Samson is set at liberty."

"But they are on parole, madam," interposed Doctor LeBaron. "They have passed their word of honor not to attempt an escape, nor" —

"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," interrupted Deborah, contemptuously. "My man's word of honor is better than any Frenchman's, but it has not been enough to give him the same liberty these men have had thrust upon them. It is no more than fair that since his parole has not been granted, these others should not be allowed theirs."

"She's right," growled Deacon Foster, who hated the debonair young Frenchmen, as did his brother, Deacon Fuller.

"The usage of war is on her side," murmured Warren, who had been studying military tactics, perhaps with prevision of his military career in the future.

"But my good woman," exclaimed LeBaron, rising to his feet with an angry flush upon his sallow cheek, "it will not help your husband at all, to make these gentlemen uncomfortable! It is no more than womanish spite to demand it."

"I do not suppose Simeon Samson's comfort is very dear to you, Doctor," replied Deborah, meaningly. "But it is to me, and perhaps these gentlemen of English blood can see the matter more clearly than you."

"Sit down, man, sit down," muttered Consider How

land, near whose chair the doctor had paused. "There's neither profit nor honor to be gained in fighting with a woman; and she's in the right; we shall have to lock up the Johnny Crapauds till Samson is set free, and I'm sorry too, for that little fellow at my house is as merry as a grig and plays like a boy with my little Hannah."

"As my Margot with Montarnaud," said the doctor, in the same tone, but the strident voice of Deacon Foster, who acted as chairman, drowned his words.

"It seems to me, brethren, that Deborah Samson's claim is a just and honest one. If the Frenchmen of Baie Chaleur had held our man at his word, it would be fair that we should give their men the like privilege; but they have not, and for us to be less strict than they, would seem to belittle our own standing, which, I take it, Plymouth men are not ready as yet to do."

"Our fathers on Burying Hill would come down to flout us, if we did," said Howland, and the two or three other men present claiming Pilgrim blood straightened themselves upon their chairs.

"I agree with Brother Foster," said Fuller, briefly; and the matter being put to vote was decided within the next five minutes in favor of Deborah.

Leaving the council chamber hot and angry, Doctor LeBaron turned up Summer Street, cast a withering glance at the ruinous old prison building, and walked at the stretch of his long legs up the hill beyond, toward the Carver woods.

Suddenly a smile broke through the wrath upon his face, for the sight of the prison recalled in spite of himself a story at which he had laughed heartily only a few months earlier.

It concerned a notorious petty criminal, whose name need not be mentioned, but who had been time and again convicted in the provincial court of one offense and another, and with much solemnity sentenced to various terms of imprisonment in this same jail; but so ruinous was its condition and so enterprising the criminal that he had never remained more than a week or so before making his escape. Convicted and sentenced about a year before this time, he had with impudent gravity protested to the court against the sentence, stating that the jail was so open to the weather and generally uncomfortable that he could not stay in it, and, unless it was extensively repaired, certainly should not do so. The outraged magistrates at once clapped another three months upon the sentence, but the same day ordered Jonathan Dix, carpenter, to carry lumber and other material forthwith to the jail, and to see that it was made secure. Whether they specified comfortable as well, I do not know, but in those days the theory was prevalent that criminals were imprisoned by way of punishment, and were not to be treated better than virtuous paupers.

The lumber arrived, and the prisoner, inspecting it from the window of his cell, shook his head at its quality; and as a knot of those idlers inevitable in the best regulated communities gathered in the gloaming under his window, he began, in a mellow and jolly voice, to chant the story of his exploits, closing every verse with the refrain:—

“ Mr. Dix has brought some sticks
 To mend my prison door,
 But I don't doubt that I shall get out
 As I have done before, O!
 As I have done before! ”

And in point of fact, when Mr. Dix arrived the next morning to begin his work, there was no prisoner to secure, and the carpenter's coat and tools, stored in a snug nook among the lumber, had vanished as well.

The doctor's smile, at this reminiscence, had not vanished before he met a merry little party coming up the hill from the spring, to which the Pilgrims had trodden a path from their fort on Burying Hill a century or more before. This party consisted first of an aged donkey; then of a very good-looking young man, almost a boy, indeed, for he had yet to see his twenty-first birthday, although military training, Provençal blood, and Gallic race combined to make him appear older than an Anglo-Saxon of the same years. Walking beside the donkey, with a hand upon his bridle, this young man advanced in a crablike fashion, his head being twisted completely around in anxious yet merry supervision of a very rickety little cart, much cobbled and tackled with rope, and crowded to its utmost capacity with a chattering, laughing, restless, overflowing company of little lasses, a small boy or two, and an indefinite number of baskets heaped with clusters of ripe grapes, purple, red, and white, — those delicious wild grapes for which Plymouth was once almost as famed as Eshcol.

"There, Margot!" cried he, as the cart at last halted upon level ground, "I told you that Neddie and I could get you up the hill!"

A chorus of merry voices replied, but above them rose Margot's, in its penetrating sweetness: —

"Papa! O papa! See our grapes! We have so many, so many!"

"Good evening, sir," exclaimed the young man, put-

ting his hand to his hat. "The young ladies and I have indeed been fortunate."

"Ah — yes, I see. Fortunate — oh, *felix*, *infelix*!" muttered the doctor, staring absently at the baskets of grapes, and then at the little girls, suddenly as quiet as mice in presence of the cat; for most of them had been bred in wholesome awe of their elders and not one enjoyed the freedom permitted to the doctor's motherless girls.

"Betsey Foster, and Molly and Nancy Mayhew, Becca Fuller, Hannah Howland, Pris and Margot, — why, you have a cadet from all our houses, Lieutenant, not to mention the boys."

"Yes," replied Montarnaud, gayly, "Margot asked who she would, and even if her taste is for her sister's friends rather than those of her own age, it is her affair; she is hostess."

"Well; — nay, then — here, Pris, you're the oldest, take the reins, and drive home with these children. I have a word for Monsieur de Montarnaud, and will ask him to walk as far as widow Ring's cottage; she has sent for me."

"But certainly, *monsieur*," said the lieutenant readily, "if *Mademoiselle Marguerite* will excuse me."

"She must," replied her father briefly; and without pausing to notice the mutinous grimace Margot bestowed upon her playmate as he made her a farewell bow, he put his hand within the young man's arm and led him away.

"You shall have one good walk before you lose the use of your legs," said he, with rather a futile attempt at pleasantry.

"Lose the use of my legs?" echoed the lieutenant,

glancing down at those shapely members, clad in doe-skin breeches and scarlet hose, a costume the young man had fancied as combining the trophies of the chase with indomitable gayety, and therefore suited to his captivity in the savage wilds of America.

"My poor boy, how shall I tell you my news!" said the doctor, with a sigh.

CHAPTER XXI.

NAUGHTY LITTLE DEBORAH.

A FEW days later, Dr. LeBaron, summoned to Eleazer Rogers' house near Ring's Lane, took Burying Hill in his way, and paused, as was his wont, near Governor Bradford's grave to consider the view, and to wonder if any one of the vessels creeping up from the underworld, and swelling their white sails bravely to the easterly wind as they swept past Elisha's Point and Far Manomet, brought news of Teresa, the cherished darling, whom, at her own earnest desire, he had spared to her widowed brother Lazarus in his tropical home.

"Our young parson would say 't was sinful to yearn so for a face of flesh," muttered he — "but still I do, and must! I wish I knew if that fellow trifled with her affections; but no man could ever know it from her — my lily of France!"

"Good morning, Doctor LeBaron," said a voice at his elbow, and as he turned sharply it was to meet perhaps the least welcome of any woman's face in Plymouth. His own grew very cold, but raising his three-cornered hat with magnificent courtesy, he returned the salutation: —

"Good morning, Mrs. Simeon Samson," and would have passed, but was detained by a touch upon his sleeve.

"Shall you see your French friends to-day, sir?"

"There are few days when I fail to spend some time in the prison to which you have consigned them."

"Well, you may do them a good office from me to-day. Captain Samson has escaped, and will soon be here. Then they may be released as before."

"And where got you this news, madam?"

"That's no matter to you — and still — well, smile if you like, it will never harm me; I'll tell you where I got this news. — God gave it to me."

"It is a large claim you make. May I ask you to explain?"

"Last night, sleeping or waking, I know not which, I had a vision. I saw my husband, Simeon Samson, dressed in woman's clothes and standing on a sea beach; the bows of a boat were to be seen through thick mist, and a man stood by with an oar in hand, to push off; there was a woman too" —

"Ah, a woman too! I think the vision is founded upon experience, is it not, madam?"

"Oh, I knew you'd jeer and flout me, in your hateful French way," replied Deborah, bringing back her gaze from the quivering horizon line, and fixing it scornfully upon the doctor's face; "and I never would have told you, but that to know he is free so filled me with charity toward all men that I wanted to send some comfort to those lads yonder, whom I pity" —

"Even as the woman of your dream pitied your gay goodman," suggested LeBaron. "Well, I will tell my friends your dream; even a laugh may do them some good."

"And I will add a word of counsel for your own benefit, Doctor. When you show yourself so bitter toward Simeon Samson and his wife, folk may wonder if

one near to you was slighted for that wife's sake. It is not shrewd of you to set the women's tongues wagging, Doctor."

"You are right, dame. Saint James says that the very fires of hell are kindled of them."

And, delivering this Parthian arrow, the doctor pursued his way so rapidly that he only half heard the retort.

"And he that hateth his brother shall taste the fervor of those fires."

Perhaps this encounter stirred the doctor's spirit more than he would have chosen to say; perhaps it revived grief and disappointment, too recent to sleep very soundly; however it was, before he sat down to dinner he ordered Quasho to see that the chaise was properly cleaned and harnessed, and as the family rose from table he said:—

"Elizabeth, has Margaret been a good child this morning? Sewed her sampler, and done her task to your mind?"

"Yes, father, she has been a very good girl," replied the elder sister, with a pretty motherly smile upon the little one.

"Then get on your hood, or bonnet, or whatever, and we will go to see the little girls I told you of, Margot."

"Good, good! But may n't Philip go too?" demanded the child, her great dark eyes full of tears.

"Poor fellow! It is not his fault if he cannot," replied her father. "And who knows but in a few days he can? We shall see if we have a prophetess among us."

And, Margot, not pausing for an answer to the enigma, ran away to put on her cape, and let Elizabeth

button on some warm sleeves ; for the day was cold, and nobody in those days ever saw a girl's dress made with high neck or long sleeves. A quaint little skull-cap hood, tied under the chin with cherry ribbons, completed the costume, and Margot settled herself in infinite content at her father's side, as, giving the rein to Black Bess, he drove rapidly through the town, past the field where twenty years before Quasho had pulled turnips and propounded conundrums to his master, and out upon the Kingston road. Again as on that day the doctor drew rein upon the bridge, just before entering the town, and looked long and silently upon the placid river, stealing through its ripe marsh-grasses to the sea, — looked at Captain's Hill, and the Gurnet, and all the wealth of waters gleaming cold and bright in the autumn sunshine.

"A goodly sight, — a fair scene," said he aloud, and turned to smile upon the child, who coldly replied : —

"I had rather see Philip."

"What, don't you care for nature, Margot?" demanded her father, driving on.

"No, papa, I like people better."

"You should have been born two or three generations earlier in the LeBaron annals," said the doctor, quizzically. "Well, jump out and gather me those cardinal flowers, mademoiselle. I care for them, if you do not."

An hour later, Black Bess halted before the same ruinous old farmhouse where widow Crewe had lived, and her daughter died, that Ansel Ring and Molly Peach might try the force of a mother's curse.

A little more ruinous now, in spite of some clouting and patching, and set in fields a little more barren and

neglected ; for Jonathan Samson, like his far-away cousin Simeon, was a sailor, and not a farmer, and when, in the division of his father's property, his portion was eaten up in unlawful charges, and he was forced to accept this desolate little farm as all his inheritance, he left his wife and children upon it, and fled madly away from the face of men to the solitudes of the sea. No news ever came again to that lonely and impoverished home, and Deborah his wife, strong in the spirit of William Bradford her great grandsire, struggled on, as only such a woman can struggle, until of a sudden the overwrought body gave way, and fell upon the wretched pallet whence it was never more to rise.

She sent for no doctor, having no money to pay one ; but Lazarus LeBaron heard of her situation, and came to see her.

"Why did not you let me know of your condition before it came to this?" demanded he almost sternly, as he laid down the all but pulseless wrist.

"I could not pay you, Doctor, and I did not want to come upon the town. 'T will be bad enough for the children, and they with William Bradford and Myles Standish for their forbears!"

And the poor soul fell to crying so piteously that the doctor feared to see her die before his eyes.

"They shall not come upon the town," said he, raising her head, and forcing a cordial between the pale lips. "I will see that they come to no hardship. Nay, then, my friend, have you forgotten who is the orphan's friend?"

"Oh, Doctor, Faith can't stand up when Hope is n't there to lean upon," murmured the sick woman, bitterly.

"But Love can stand alone, and is the best of the three. Try to lean on that," replied LeBaron, in a gentler voice than he often used.

This was a fortnight ago, and now, as he tied Black Bess to the fence, the doctor looked curiously at the upper windows.

"Not yet," said he aloud. "Margot, you shall come in and warm yourself, and see the little girl" —

But a wild shriek, or succession of shrieks, from the house cut short his words, and the door flying violently open, a wild elf of a child sprang out, and, hastily gathering both hands full of sand and pebbles from the path, turned to discharge them with admirable aim in the face of a young woman who pursued her with a bunch of rods.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" screamed the latter, dropping the rod, and clapping both hands to her eyes. Oh, you little imp of Satan" —

"What's all this?" interposed the doctor, sternly. "What are you about, Polly Sweet? I did n't put you here to whip the children, nor to call them foul names, but to take care of their mother" —

"Well, she's dead," whimpered the young woman, drying her smarting eyes upon her apron. "And when I sot out to tell the young ones, and send Billy to the neighbors for help to lay her out, that imp of a Deb, she up and flew in my face like a wildcat, trying to scratch my eyes out, and hollering that I was a liar. So I took the stick just to teach her manners; and the first lick she got, out she flew" —

"There, that will do. Go into the house, and Deborah stay out here and play with my little Margaret. Margot, this is the poor motherless child I told you of. Be good to her."

"She's very dirty, papa," said Margot, coldly.

"I'm better than you, for all your fal-lals," retorted Deborah, promptly. "Go away; we don't want you here; you're too fine."

And yet the French Revolution was a quarter of a century beyond them!

When the doctor went home, after arranging for the burial of the poor worn body and the safety of the two boys who were left behind, he carried little Deborah, wrapped in her mother's cloak and seated in the bottom of the chaise. Margaret said but very little, and kept her skirts carefully tucked under her. Her father said less, but saw everything, and silently relinquished his unspoken plan of adopting Deborah into his own family.

"It would be bad for both, and worst of all for me," murmured he to himself, as he drove into Plymouth.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE INDIAN SUMMER AND OBERRY.

THE Peace of Paris had become a fact as well as a phrase. The Nova Scotian border was settled; the Acadians, returning in crowds to their old home, were welcomed as prodigal sons by the British government, which bestowed upon them lands and privileges, productive of envy and heartburning on the part of the elder sons who had never done amiss. Thérèse Brunel was married to Victor Beaubien of Miramichi, and when she felt like it, threatened to go to Plymouth and join her uncle Bèrgeron, who had not returned to Acadia. Simeon Samson had been at home, satisfied himself that the Lydia's ransom was honestly paid, and presently sailed again. The three French officers, released with much rejoicing, still lingered in Plymouth, waiting to hear of a comfortable passage to France; and the eleventh day of November had, with laudable punctuality, ushered in the summer of St. Martin, or, as the Pilgrims and their children preferred to call it, the Indian summer. Philip de Montarnaud, who had never encountered this delightful Americanism, was wild with the exhilaration of the air, the luxurious warmth, the subtle charm of a summer so potent that it can dispense with roses and foliage.

“It's superb in its self-assertion!” cried he. “It is like madame my mother, who in her white hair and

tender coloring makes the young girls pale as the stars do before the moon."

"I should like to see your mother, Philip," said Margot, clasping her hands and raising her great dark eyes to his.

The young man glanced laughingly at the doctor, who stood with them upon the brow of Cole's Hill, silently drinking in the glory of Manomet and the deep and wide sea shimmering at the horizon line into a glory too dazzling for human sight.

"Perhaps — who knows, petite?" said the young man, but the father shook his head.

"I have had enough of forecasting the future; what will be, will be," said he. "But come, we will have the chaise, with a stool for Margot, and drive along the sea road, perhaps as far as Ponds" —

"Oh, papa, go to see the French people. I like that best of all our visits. I am so fond of Rosalie Daudin."

"Fonder than of poor little Deborah Samson?" asked her father slyly, but Margot was not to be wiled into vehemence, and sedately replied, "Yes, papa; but I am glad Deborah has a good home in Middleboro'."

"She might have had a good home with us, if you had been more amiable," said the doctor gravely; but Margot slid her hand into his, with an upward glance so coaxing that the man's heart melted within him, and with a loving squeeze of the slender brown fingers he dropped them, and went to order the chaise. At the door he met Priscilla, a lissome lass, with sweet gray eyes and the prettiest, tiniest hands were ever seen.

"Father dear, I heard you tell Pompey to put oats in the chaise-box."

"Yes, Pris; what of it?"

"You will be away all day, then?"

"Perhaps; why?"

"Why, you know to-morrow is Bessie's wedding, and the parson and his wife and Ammy are coming to tea to-night."

"Yes, yes, I forgot. Ammy wants to gloat over our misery in taking tea for the last time with our own Bess. Well, I will be at home in time for the torture."

"Oh, father! Poor Ammy!"

"Rich Ammy, since he's to have our Bessie."

"Indeed he is. And we thought, if you liked it, father, to ask Mrs. Hammatt and Lucy and her brother Abraham to join us. We were there at tea not long ago."

"Very well," replied the doctor, shortly, for although he knew that Elizabeth would be well and wisely married to the Rev. Ammi Robbins, brother of his own pastor, it was a great grief to lose her, and his aversion to the proposed feast of farewell was more real than simulated; nor was this sorrow mitigated by Priscilla's bashful suggestion of adding the Hammatts to such a party, for although the child was still short of her sixteenth birthday, people married young in those days, and the friendly village voice already coupled Priscilla's name with that of Abraham Hammatt, whose father, prospering on the sea, had established a ropewalk under charge of his son, where, for many years to come, cordage and cables for the Plymouth shipping were laid with the skill and conscience of men who felt that other men's lives might depend upon the honesty of their labors.

So, although the doctor liked the Hammatts, father and son, and had an affection for the wife and mother, dating back to the day when she so bravely accepted

her lover in face of the selectmen, he did not like to hear of their being included in this family tea-party, and turned away from the kitchen door with a suppressed sigh, to meet the chaise Quasho was solemnly leading out of the stable yard.

"Where's young Pomp?" demanded the master, stepping into the low carriage.

"Gone to look fer Old Pride, I'spect," replied Quash, peevishly. "'Tween 'em they're enough to make a pore ole nigger ready 'nough to renounce dis wicked world, wid all its pomps, prides, an' oder bedevilments."

"Glad to see you know your catechism so well, Quash; and when you get hold of that boy again, I advise you to teach him that the way of the transgressor is hard."

"An' de way of de good man so mighty soft dat he apt to get bogged up to de middle," replied Quash, crossly, as he glanced at a muck-cart already prepared for an expedition to the swamps, whose tenacious black mud makes a capital dressing for the sandy soil of Plymouth gardens.

But a little later, the doctor, ever a passionate lover of Nature, forgot all frets and worries, even the loss of his beloved daughters, in the deep delight of living; for the day was one of those that seem sent to tenderly lure man from earth to paradise, thrilling with mystic touch those nerves whose vibrations pass like waves of sound far beyond the ken of their first motion. Who has not stood, on such a day, with bated breath and eager eye, and all the soul on tiptoe with anticipation of some audible music of the spheres, some visible rift in the glittering arch of heaven, some widening out of the horizon of a sea that seems no other than the pathway of a glorious eternity? Who has not felt that the veil

between us and the things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man comprehended, has grown so attenuate that only its own dazzling glory prevents us from piercing it?

Ah, well, ye who know what I mean, remember that Nature is but a type, and that Hope beckons us on to behold the antitype, whose perfectness we may not as yet even imagine.

The doctor was very silent as he drove along the sea road, or stopped now and again at some vantage point to contemplate the view; for, as in many another moment of his life, he felt himself more alone than in solitude.

Margot, who by some caprice of heredity had taken the character of her French ancestry, with very little impress from the father through whom it came, was cold and careless of scenery, and Philip de Montarnaud, polished gentleman that he was, treated Nature with the same elaborate courtesy he would have showed to any other lady with whom he was not much acquainted; making such pretty compliments to the view from Manomet Point that the doctor somewhat peremptorily proposed that he and Margot should get out and look for checkerberries among the stunted shrubbery at hand.

An hour or so later, Black Bess was halted before the largest of a little group of cottages of the most primitive construction, recently built in that corner of Plymouth still called Oberry. As the doctor fastened his horse to a post, while Philip helped Margot to alight, an old woman, with healthy frost-red cheeks, bright blue eyes, and hair whiter even than her Norman cap, appeared at the door, and in a voice at once respectful and affection-

ate, bade the doctor welcome, in a language more like the French of France than that of Acadia.

"Ah, mother Bèrgeron!" cried he, in the French of Paris, "I have brought my little girl, you see, and also a compatriot of yours, Monsieur de Montarnaud, who can give you late news from la belle France."

"But I am honored exceedingly, and so are my children!" exclaimed the old woman, curtsying again and again. "The little granddaughter will be proud beyond saying to welcome mademoiselle. Ah, Julie, come here then, and speak for yourself! And will the gentlemen give themselves the trouble to enter?"

"Indeed we will, for I am famishing with thirst, and nothing will quench it but a glass of your cider, mother Bèrgeron," said the doctor, taking off his three-cornered hat, and passing a handkerchief across his high but somewhat narrow forehead.

"We have it just new, and yet ripe enough to be safe," declared the old woman, well pleased. "And mademoiselle must have a little glass of my raspberry cordial and a bit of galette. And monsieur — pardon if I ask once more — ah, then, I have surely seen — pardon, monsieur — I am but a silly old woman, and yet — the eyes of monsieur are so strangely like my darling little lady's — indulge an old woman, monsieur, and tell me if you are of the family De Vielleroche?"

"My mother is née Françoise de Vielleroche," replied Philip de Montarnaud, polite but puzzled.

"Did not my heart tell me so!" exclaimed the old woman, clasping her hands, while the russet-bloom spread over all her face.

"She was my foster child, — my poor little Babette's foster sister. They said I gave her Babette's life,

but if so it was her right; the Lavel and Bègerons served the Seigneurs de Vielleroche in the days of the great Henri, and it was her right" —

"You were my mother's foster mother!" cried Philip, seizing the old woman's two hands, and looking eagerly into her face.

"But yes, monsieur, but yes; and my old heart warmed to the beautiful eyes of her so soon as I saw them looking at me out of the face of monsieur. *Ah, ciel!* It is the first moment of joy I have known in the fifty years I have lived in exile here in this land so triste, so savage, so desolate. The good God saw that I could bear no more, and has sent me this moment" —

"What is it, grandmère?" cried a blithe young voice, and in at the back door of the cottage tripped a pretty girl, her brown face rosy, and her black eyes bright with the exertion of bringing in a great basket of late pears. A Normandy cap of snow-white muslin nearly covered her glossy hair, and a kerchief of the same material was crossed upon her bosom. Seeing the strangers, she started, colored painfully, and made a movement to withdraw, but the doctor gayly cried: —

"No escape, Alix! We have all seen you, and know as well as if you told us that Jean Daudin is just outside, and has been helping you house the pears."

"Nay, monsieur, they are a present to grandmère from — from his father, who gathered them in the garden of Monsieur Vasson" —

"Watson, — Squire Watson?" interposed the doctor, laughing. "I knew he had Daudin at work for him, but it was Jean fils, and not Jean père, that brought them over to you, now was n't it, Alix?"

"But yes, monsieur le Docteur. Père Daudin has

taught his children to wait upon him," replied Alix, demurely; and having put her basket in a corner, she applied herself to helping her grandmother set out the simple refreshments she was proud to offer to her guests.

An hour or so passed by, to be marked in red letter upon poor homesick Marie Bèrgeron's calendar, for the young Frenchman indulged her to the uttermost in descriptions of his mother and her married home, of the old château de Vielleroche, where he had often visited his grandparents and uncle and aunt, and of his own adventures in the service of his native land. At length the doctor interposed, watch in hand, and reminded Philip that they had still some visits to pay, and the tea-party in prospect. Then drawing Mother Bèrgeron apart, he inquired:—

"Is it decided that Alix will marry Jean Daudin?"

"But surely yes, monsieur."

"And what about a priest?"

"Ah, monsieur, there is the only sorrow of our hearts! None can tell us where our own dear Père Augustin has been carried, and we know no one in this melancholy place. Even Père LeBlanc, the notary, has been carried who knows where. If you were a notary, monsieur le Docteur, we would rather confide the marriage to you than to wait for some priest who will never come."

"I will tell you, mother Bèrgeron. We have a minister, if not a priest, who speaks French admirably, and the law holds his marriage as valid as a notary's or as Père Augustin's."

"A heretic, monsieur!" murmured the old woman, crossing herself and drawing back.

"A Protestant like myself, — yes, but as good a man

and faithful a shepherd of souls as lives," replied the doctor, rather severely. "And his marriage will be legal, and he can solemnize it in French. Talk it over among yourselves, and some day when I am up here let me know your decision. And now, good-by. Come, Margot, say the last word to Julie, and jump in. Adieu, Alix; ask your grandmère what I have said to her. Now, then, Philip!"

And the yellow-bodied chaise creaked once upon its easy springs, and then rolled down the sandy road, its hood wagging up and down at each step, as if nodding assent to the merry chatter going on beneath it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PRICE OF A WOMAN.

“LOOK here, Quash! What’s this I hear about you?”

“Lors, mas’r, how kin I tell? Mabbe you hear I done git de sleigh down and rub it all up fine, ready fer de snow dat’s hangin’ ober Cap’n’s Hill.”

“No, sir. What did you say to Judge Paine, only this morning?”

“You don’ mean to say dat ole gen’leman got round quick as dis fer ter tell you, mas’r! Well, dat jis’ prove de truf o’ what I said.”

“Well, what was it?”

“W’y, mas’r, I met de jedge comin’ out o’ Mas’ Howland’s; he so gran’ dat he can’t go to common taverns sech as” —

“Never mind your opinion as to either him or the taverns, — what did you say to him, sirrah?”

“W’y, mas’r, I des offer him de complimen’s ob de season, and pullin’ off my hat berry respeckful I says, ‘Good-mornin’, Jedge,’ ” says I. ‘What’s de news dis mornin’, Jedge?’ says I; an’ hé lay he head back like as ole Kate does w’en she goin’ to kick, an’ sort o’ sighted ’long de side ob he great nose tryin’ fer ter make out w’ere dat mis’able no account nigger mout be dat dare ax him a ques’ion; an’ w’en he foun’ me he kind o’ consider me a minute, an’ den growls out, ‘All de news dat consarn you is, de debble’s dead!’ So I

jes t'ank him for his perliteness, an' says, says I, 'Sho ! Dat pore feller dead ! Well, I knowed he was in *pain* dis long time, but did n' spec he 'd 'scaped out !' Dat all I said, mas'r, 'clare to gracious 't is !"

"That 's all, is it ! Well, sir, I advise you not to get yourself into court this week, while Justice Paine is on the bench."

"Specs I 'd fin' justice 'thout mercy, shore ;" and Quasho was going away chuckling, when a breathless boy upon a hard-trotting horse drew rein at the head of the alley where the doctor was standing, and delivered a message to the effect that Mrs. Wadsworth of Marshfield was very ill, and must see Doctor LeBaron without delay.

"Why did n't she send for one of the Marshfield doctors ?" asked the doctor in a vexed voice. "I don't care for practice twenty miles from home."

"Dat Miss Lizzie Doten, ain't it ?" inquired Quash, who had paused to assist at the interview.

"Yes," replied his master, crossly.

"Well, seem to me mighty nat'ral dat de pore soul want to show she don' bear no grudge 'gainst mas'r doctor fer fotchin' her inter de worl' by gibbin him a chance to help her out."

"There, that will do, Quasho. You've reached the end of your tether."

"Guess den I better go an' put ole Kate inter de sulky, had n't I, mas'r ?"

"No, I'll take Black Bess. It's a long drive," replied the doctor, absently ; and Quasho shuffled away, muttering, —

"Know'd he 'd go to Lizzie Doten."

Quentin Wadsworth's farm was on the outskirts of

Marshfield, toward the sea, and as the doctor listened to Elizabeth's entreaties, and waited for dinner before he started, it was already twilight when he arrived at the lonely gray house, so squat to the ground and so surrounded with tentacle-like out-buildings and additions that it much resembled a great gray spider with all its legs extended in the effort to cling to the ground, whence the raging autumn winds constantly sought to wrench it.

A pocket of arable land niched in among the sand-dunes and extending back among the evergreen woods composed the farm on land, and limitless miles of ocean rolling almost to his doorstep was the farmer's plantation at sea, and the source of more than half his revenue.

A garden, hedged and diked from the salt spray and biting winds, lay at the south of the house, and in its most sheltered corner stood a row of basket beehives, their product giving the farmer's wife her pocket money, or, if she chose, her private hoard.

With his hand upon the great iron latch of the kitchen door, the doctor paused and looked around.

"A dirty night, and something more than that," said he, glancing at the dense black clouds rolling up across the low-hung gray of the sky, and listening to the peculiar moan of the sea making upon the Marshfield flats.

"Looks as if the line storm had forgot something and come back to look for it," drawled a slow voice at his ear, and the doctor turned to greet a long, lean, melancholy man in early middle life, whose yellow skin and eyes and colorless lips told their mournful tale of dyspepsia and bilious depression.

"Come in, Doctor. I expect the woman's going to-night. Tide sets out 'bout three in the morning. It's

making now, and fetching in ugly weather. It'll be a main bad night for her to go. Seems as though anything as light as a sperit would blow away in such a gale as is coming, — could n't fetch, somehow."

The doctor turned and looked at him with a professional eye.

"Do you eat those sour apples before breakfast, as I told you?" demanded he.

"Consid'able often, Doctor, but some days I don't feel to eat nothing."

"But you drink coffee, instead?"

"Now and agin, Doctor."

"Like to feel sick, don't you?"

"I don't know as I like it first rate, Doctor."

"Why, yes, you do, or else you're a fool, and I should n't like to think that of you. I told you that coffee and chocolate and fat pork and molasses all were bad for you. I told you that acid fruit and stale wheat bread and lean meat and raw eggs and some other things were good for you. You choose the first lot and neglect the second, so I can only conclude you love to be sick. Now take me to your wife."

"She's in grandma'am's part; said the bedroom was too cramped like."

And Wadsworth led the way from the great empty kitchen through a dark passage to what had once been the farmhouse; but another front having been added to the structure at Quentin's marriage, it had now become simply "the old part," where Quentin's father and mother had lived and died, the latter event being of very recent occurrence. Here, in a large low room darkened by curtains of striped linseywoolsey of her own spinning and weaving, lay poor Lizzie Wadsworth

dying of consumption, and pining, as Plymouth people always do in misfortune or illness, for the quaint old town by the sea.

The doctor looked at her, and hardly needed to lay a finger upon the thready pulse or to bend his ear toward the laboring lungs to know that the end was close at hand, and that only as a man and as a Christian could he be of any use.

So sitting down beside the bed, he began to speak in a quiet, cheerful way of the old days when Lizzie Doten with some of his own daughters were scholars together at Mistress Molly Cobb's dame school, on North Street, where they were taught that s,h,a,l,l spelt shawl, and Mistress Cobb illustrated the instruction by twitching at her own little plaid shoulder-shawl, and saying, "Like this, you know, child." Furthermore, after spelling out the sentence, "Hot love is soon cold," they were told, "Yes, hot loaf is soon cold if you set it eend up, in the butt'ry window, as you 'd oughter."

"The house and all is gone now, though," whispered the sick woman, forgetting her own ill feelings for the moment.

"Yes, Josiah Rider bought it and built a new house, and afterward sold it to his sister, widow Jackson, who kept a chocolate shop there ten years or more; and excellent chocolate she made, as good as I have ever drunk. Well, poor soul, her labors are over at last, and she is at rest."

"Widow Hannah Jackson dead!" murmured the sick woman, one of the ruling passions of her sex strong even then.

"Yes, a year or two since, and left her house and land to her granddaughter, Elizabeth Shurtleff, whom I dare say you remember."

"Yes, but younger than we were."

"I suppose so, — yes. Well, Elizabeth has married Ephraim Spooner, a fine brisk young fellow and well to do. He has bought the land through to King Street, where our malcontents built a church and presently pulled it down again, and he has opened an alley through from Howland Street to King Street, just answering my alley from King to Leyden Street, and " —

But the eyelids had slowly fallen, and the lines of sleepless pain were fading out of the forehead, in a blessed moment of obliviousness; so the doctor allowed his low tones to gently lapse into silence, and folding his arms leaned back, watching the glorious gleams of color, metallic blue, softest rose, green, and royal purple, that shot fitfully up from the driftwood upon the fire, a section of the stern part of some long-forgotten craft; heart of oak, and hard to conquer it was, but the cruel creeping tongues of flame lapped again and again over the firm-grained plank, until the last moist breath was scorched away, and then they danced upon the blackened surface, and ate deeper and deeper toward the heart.

"I saw the same thing in Paris," muttered the doctor, his memory going back to certain glittering temptations his youth had resisted, not altogether from pure horror of sin, but partly from keen observation of the effect of their indulgence upon his comrades.

The reverie was broken by an invitation to supper, as the evening meal was honestly called when tea was hardly known.

A young girl, daughter of the housekeeper, came to sit with the sick woman, and the doctor, cautioning her to be quiet, returned to the kitchen, where his host and

the good woman who "did" for him, and intended, after a decent interval, to marry him, stood waiting, one at either end of a table without a cloth, whereon stood what might well have been the remains of Miss Mimy Nourse's dinner. On a huge pewter platter lay a mass of cold salt beef, with another of pork, and around both a wreath of cold vegetables; a loaf of rye and Indian bread, a quarter of a cheese, a plate of butter, a dish of simballs, a jug of cider and another of milk: such was the feast, and probably ninety-nine out of a hundred of the supper tables set out that evening in the Old Colony would have borne a marvelous resemblance to it.

The master of the house asked a blessing (for although men in those days were chary of compliments to each other, they had not learned to be discourteous toward God, and always thanked Him for his gifts), and then the little party sat down.

"About as heavy a storm as I've seen this ten year back," said Wadsworth, piling his guest's plate.

"Yes, — a wild night, a wild night," said the doctor absently, for the noise of the lashing waves upon the flat shore, the shrieking of the wind, and swirl of the rain driven like shot upon the window panes, combined in his consciousness with the sense of impending death, and produced one of those abstracted and exalted moods before which the details of ordinary life pass almost unheeded.

"I've got a bed all made up for the doctor, Mr. Wadsworth," said the housekeeper, as they rose from table.

"I'm obliged to you, but I shall not use it yet," replied the doctor, turning with his hand upon the latch. "I will sit awhile with my patient. Wadsworth, I hardly think she'll last till the turn of the tide."

"She's a very sick woman, I know, but they mostly go out with the tide," replied the husband, phlegmatically.

"I guess I'll see if she don't want some gruel or something before you set down with her," said the housekeeper, taking a little copper skillet from the corner of the fireplace, and pouring the contents into a bowl. "Pity to waste plum-porridge when you've got it made."

"It would be wasted indeed if she swallowed it," said the doctor, "but she won't;" and in effect, when a few moments later he entered the sick-room, he found little Nancy greedily devouring the porridge, while her mother, solemnly shaking her head, left the room, saying:—

"Mis' Wadsworth's eat her last mess o' gruel in *this* world."

"Let us hope she will be asked to eat none in the world to come," muttered the doctor, who detested gruel, but neither the housekeeper nor Nancy heard this pious aspiration; and presently, with a hearth clean swept, two or three fresh candles near by, and a pretty little vellum-covered French treatise on the possibility of an Elixir Vitæ in his hand, the doctor settled himself to read and think, to watch the driftwood as it flamed in fiery iris, and to listen to the spirit of the storm madly shrieking for entrance to that death-room. Suddenly the doctor laid down his French book, and fetching a great Bible from the table between the windows turned to the Song of the Three Children, and read aloud as if to invisible auditors.

"But the angel of the Lord came down into the furnace together with Azarias and his fellows, and smote

the flame of the fire out of the oven, and made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist whistling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, neither hurt nor troubled them." And again turning the leaves he added, in the voice of one who confutes an adversary, "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear!" "Even as he rescued those, so shall he rescue this." And being all alone with God, and the Prince of the Power of the Air, and his servant Death, Doctor LeBaron knelt beside the deathbed, and prayed silently and fervently, and after his own fashion.

Midnight struck, and almost immediately the bedroom door opened very quietly to admit the husband.

"How is she?" whispered he.

"Very low. Going fast. She is unconscious."

"Can you tell how long?"

"Not precisely. Perhaps an hour."

"Tide turns at three."

"I cannot tell if she will wait for it."

"Well, I want to know very particular just a few minutes before she goes."

"I will call you, but probably she will not be conscious."

"That's no matter. I'd like to know *sure*."

"Well, I will call you."

The door closed as softly as it had opened, but in another hour reopened, and the same colloquy ensued.

Again at two, and the doctor grew rather ashamed of not having appreciated the tender affection of the undemonstrative husband, and suggested: —

"You had better come and sit here with me. Possibly she may be conscious for a moment, at the last."

"No, I've got to get ready and be right on hand before the last breath's got cold on the air. But I might wait in here, I suppose."

"Yes, wait in here," said the doctor, stooping to listen to the fluttering breath. "Each moment may be the last."

The farmer disappeared, and the doctor, a finger on the pulse and his eyes upon that gray changed face, sat thinking his own thoughts and waiting to see the end.

Once more the door opened, and a strange burly figure entered; it was indeed Quentin Wadsworth, but so disguised that LeBaron, for the moment, saw in him only the embodiment of his own fantastic visions. A yellow oilskin coat covered him from head to heel, and was girt about the middle with a red woolen scarf; a hat of the same material, and furnished with a cape falling upon the shoulders, was tied down bonnet-wise by a little plaid shawl belonging to Nancy; a tin lantern, pierced with many holes, through which shone a dubious and broken light, was in his hand, and it was in a voice hoarse with emotion that he whispered: —

"Is she going? It's 'most three."

"Almost gone. Are you going for the minister, or Doctor Willis?"

"Nary one. She saw the minister to-day, and Willis ain't a patch on you for a doctor."

"What, then?"

"Why, I'm going to tell the bees! Did n't you know why I was so pertikler about bein' called? If there's a death, and you don't tell the bees of it, first thing 'fore the breath's cold, they'll all leave early in the morning, and you'll never see them again."

“And that was why you were so anxious to know the moment of her death?”

“Yes, that was it.”

“How fond you are of—your bees!”

The man paused for a slow moment of pondering, and then said in his heavy tones:—

“I s’pose you mean I ain’t fond of my wife, but I am. Fact is I’m free to confess I’d rather have lost every bee I’ve got; why, I’d rather have lost the best cow in my herd than lost that woman, I had *so*! But if I’ve got to lose her, why, it don’t make it any better to lose the bees inter the bargain, and she was main fond of ’em herself.”

“Yes, yes, I see — be quiet now!” And fifteen minutes ticked away, while the husband stood like a statue, and the doctor, with his back to him, sat wiping the death damps from that cadaverous face, and revolving many thoughts in a mind that seldom found full expression.

At last he turned his head, and motioned toward the door with his hand. Quentin Wadsworth stirred, hesitated, then on laborious tiptoe drew near the bed, gazed for a moment, then stooped and kissed the clammy brow.

“Good-by, Liz,” muttered he; but the doctor, moving impatiently, said:—

“Go tell the bees, man, or you may lose them into the bargain.”

And as the old eight-day clock in the kitchen with moan and groan struck three, and the tide on Marshfield flats hung lifeless for a moment before it turned to the ebb, Lizzie Wadsworth’s soul went forth to meet its

Judge, and her husband, breasting the howling wind,
hung over the beehives and chanted : —

“ Bees, I tell you of a death,
And bring you here the parting breath !
Death has come and death has gone :
Make your honey in the morn.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

A SCENE OF HORROR.

“DOCTOR, if you ain’t in too great of a hurry, I’d be very much beholden to you to stop as you go apast the buryin’ ground, and help me pick out a spot for Lizzie. Somehow I don’t like to go alone to such places, with death in the house and all.”

The doctor’s smile was quizzical, but his answer was courteous.

“I will gladly do all I can to please you, friend Wadsworth, for you have taught me much of human nature.”

Quentin Wadsworth cogitated this reply all the way to the graveyard, but never arrived at its interpretation, and for the rest of his life rather resented it.

The grave was soon selected, and while Quentin drove some little stakes to mark its boundaries, the doctor went a few steps farther to read an epitaph of which he was fond.

“ Here Lyes Ye Ashes
Of Ye Reverend Learned
& Pious Mr Edward Tompson
Pastor of Ye Church of
Marshfield who Suddenly
Departed This Life March
Ye 16th 1705
Anno Ætatis Suee 40

“ Here in a Tyrant’s Hand Doth Captive Lye
A Rare Synopsis of Divinity,

Old Patriarchs, Prophets, Gospel Bishops Meet
Under Deep Silence in their winding Sheet;
Here Rest Awhile in Hope, with Full Intent
When their King Calls to Meet in Parliament."

"Looking at old Parson Tompson's stone, Doctor? Ah, he was a learned man! I've heard the old folks say his sermons were stuffed so full of Greek and Latin you could hardly understand a word of 'em. He wan't the man to put his neighbors to an open shame talking at 'em in meeting, as some folks do. I'd like to set under just such another man" —

"'To sit in Parliament,'" murmured the doctor, catching at the only word his brain had assimilated.

"Eh?" gasped Quentin.

"Oh, yes — yes, the reverend doctor died only a few months after my father, and I dare say they were acquainted."

"Like enough, like enough; doctors and parsons mostly are acquainted. Well, sir, I'll bid you good-day, and am greatly obliged for your company. I suppose there'll be a pretty heavy bill, but if you'll be kind of easy" —

"It's got to be all paid up before you marry again; mind that, Wadsworth, or I'll come and kill your bees."

And the doctor, stepping into his sulky, nodded to his astonished debtor, touched Black Bess with the whip, and set off on his long drive over the sandy roads and through the melancholy autumn woods between Marshfield and Plymouth.

He was within a few miles of home, and already wondering what Elizabeth would have ready for dinner, when both he and Bess were startled by a succession of piercing shrieks and cries of "Murder! Murder! Help! Fire! Murder!" — all in the gasping voice of

a woman, who ran and stumbled and fell, and picked herself up, but never stopped shrieking for one single moment.

“Whoa, Bess! Be quiet, you beast! Who’s there? This way!”

And not waiting for his call to be obeyed, the doctor sprang from his carriage, knotted the rein around a tree, and hastened up the narrow wood-road whence came the shrieks and exclamations. Just around the first turn he had to step suddenly aside into the bushes, to avoid collision with the frantic creature who uttered them, and who, in all the blind terror of a frightened animal, was plunging past, never seeing him, when the doctor, who knew the face of every man, woman, and child within ten miles of his own door, caught her by the arm, exclaiming:—

“Hannah Crombie, what’s the matter with you? You’re safe now, girl; stop screaming, and tell me what has so frightened you.”

“O Doctor LeBaron! Oh, Doctor!”

“Well, what is it, child?”

“Oh, little Molly and Neddie, and Dorcas and baby—oh, oh, oh!”

“Has something happened to the children? Where are Mr. English and your mistress?”

“All, all, every one of them, he and all, and I to come in on them singing away as happy—oh, I’ll never sing again, never, never, n-e-v-e-r!” And with the frightened quaver of her last word Hannah went off into violent hysterics, and slipped from the doctor’s grasp to the ground, where she lay writhing almost like an epileptic. The doctor watched her for a moment; then dragging her into the middle of the grassy road, where

she could not hurt herself, he left her, and hastened on to the pretty little clearing upon the hill rising from the banks of the placid river so often referred to, where Ichabod English had built a house and carried home a bride some years before. This bride was Acsah Ring, the last surviving child, save one, of Ansel Ring and Molly Peach; and when she, left quite destitute at her mother's death, was so fortunate as to attract the attention of the young stranger just arrived from over seas to settle in Plymouth, people said that mother Crewe's curse was worn out, and that one, at least, of Molly Peach's children was to prosper and be happy.

But now!

The kitchen door lay wide open to the sunshine which succeeded the storm of the previous night, and on the millstone step sat a shepherd dog, his nose up-raised, howling fearfully; near at hand a cat, with bristling fur, expanded tail, and great glaring green eyes, wandered restlessly up and down, occasionally licking her chops in a nervous kind of fashion, and uttering a distressful yowl.

Doctor LeBaron, who studied animals as keenly as he did men and Nature, looked at both these, and his healthy cheek grew pale.

"Something fearful has come this way," said he aloud, and pushing past the dog, who looked at him and ceased howling, he passed into the kitchen, which was clean and empty, and through it to the sitting-room, then to the parlor, and at last to the great sunny bedroom, where some six months before he had attended Acsah and her last baby.

At the door he stopped, and clung to the casing in utter amazement and horror. Upon the bed lay the

mother with the baby in her arms, both dead, while the scarlet stain upon their night-robes told what death they had died. On the floor, upon a blanket spread, in the ghastly irony of insanity, to protect their little forms from the hard floor, lay three children, Molly, and Neddie, and Dorcas, their pretty faces calm and white, their little limbs straightened, and their hands folded each upon its breast, above the wound that had let their young lives out.

At a table, his body fallen forward across it, his dead fingers crisped upon a pistol resting upon his knee, lay Ichabod English, the husband and father of those around him, and from whom he had now forever divided himself.

For some moments Doctor LeBaron stood staring at this scene with incredulous horror, every faculty frozen in awful amazement. He was aroused by the dog, who had quietly followed him in, and stood expectant of some help to those he loved; finding that none came, he turned upon the intruder with a savage growl and a grim bark, that said as plainly as words: "Help them, or you shall be as they!"

The man understood, for there are moments when reason and instinct need no words to interpret each to each, and, rousing himself, he muttered: —

"Yes, Jack, yes, but it's only too sure!" and taking off his hat he passed into the room, carefully skirting the blanket so precisely laid, and leaning over the bed drew aside the linen from the mother's breast. A little wound, accurately delivered at the precise point to insure instantaneous death, both sure and deep; another through the baby's tender bosom, and still its soft mouth bore the curve of baby fright and pain, although the

eyes were closed as if in sleep. The mother's face bore no impress of terror, and both face and limbs had been carefully composed to decent rest soon after death ; but as the hours went on, there had grown upon that face, as we most of us have watched expressions grow upon the faces of our dead, a faint smile of awful meaning ; a smile of pity and of wonder, of yearning love, and yet of eternal farewell ; a smile which told more of the mysteries beyond the veil than Death often reveals.

The doctor drew the sheet over that telltale face, and passed to the children, then to the father ; but as he examined the pistol wound through the right temple, and saw that the fingers so tightly clenched in death must have taken their grasp in life, his face grew stern and hard.

“It is his own work — and they too !”

Upon the table, close beside the pistol lay, a thick letter, held in place by a sharp and slender dagger of Italian make, pierced through it to the table. The handle had been a cross, but Ichabod English was a Covenanter, and so hated the emblem, which to him meant not Christ, but the Pope, that he had mutilated it beyond recognition ; and the shadow which fell from it across his fallen head resembled more an accusing finger than the cross whereby the penitent robber was pardoned and saved even at the eleventh hour.

This letter was superscribed in a bold and steady hand,

To

DOCTOR LAZARUS LEBARON

THESE.

And with great surprise the doctor drew out the dagger, and carried the pierced letter into the open air to read.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LETTER.

“DOCTOR LEBARON, — It seems to me probable that you will be the first person of responsibility and authority called to witness the work I mean to accomplish this day, and I therefore address to you some explanation of a course which you naturally will condemn, but yet one which I am fain to believe God will approve.

“You know, as do all the Fathers of Plymouth, how I have striven, since I came among you, to earn an honest livelihood, and to live decently and soberly before God and man; but as you may not know, there are those who come into the world under a curse, and whose most strenuous exertions do not deliver them therefrom. My mind has been much exercised of late upon the doctrine of predestination, and whether indeed some men are born to reprobation, as Calvin holds and Pastor Robbins teaches. If it be so I, as one of the reprobate, am only damned the deeper by my efforts to intrude upon those good works reserved for the elect, and can be no worse off in another world by taking the ready way out of this, and if God indeed be such a God, I know not that I greatly care though I banish myself forever from his presence.

“Howbeit, I will not consume your time in polemical discussion, and will the more willingly leave it that since many days I feel some strange distemper in my

head, which confuses my intellect; indeed, what man can consider matters of depth while foul birds clap their wings incessantly within his brain, and the sound of many waters about to engulf him warns him to save himself, but yet without an ark? One says Hasten, and I obey; though as he is ever behind me I cannot tell who he may be, yet I obey.

“I have striven to live, I have been willing to labor, I have toiled night and day, and have prayed — yes, prayed, doubtless to mine own condemnation, being, as I have said, reprobate and lost; but the little children and their mother are of the elect: that, even this one dares not deny — and does not.

“My money is all spent, my debts are pressing, the day of hope is past, and I can work no more, for the birds who blind mine eyes and confuse my brain with the whirring of their wings. I must die, there is no possibility left of life; yet, while I hold it, life is all I have, my sole possession — it is mine own, and I have the right to mine own.

“Now, then, I will, I *will* think — you shall not come between me and the page again — stand there behind and wait — I will explain myself before I heed your call, I will justify myself to this man, with the quiet keen eyes, who has sometimes looked at me as though he saw the birds, or — there, there!

“I have a right to my own life, and I am going to take it. I hold myself responsible for the lives of these children, and I will not abandon them to starvation and the cruel, cruel world that has driven me out of its doors. I shall take them with me, the poor little ones, my brave boy, my pretty little maids; yes they shall come with their dad, who never spoke a word awry to any of

them, but while I thought of it all last night, I determined that Acsah should have her baby, lest she be too desolate — no, I have no right to Acsah's life : I did not give it, I am not responsible for it, I will not decide for her ; perhaps she will see it right to follow by the same road, and I will leave her the baby lest she should feel too desolate ; the little nursing baby will comfort her ; so this morning I have prepared, oh, so wisely, so carefully, so gently, yes, the one behind the chair arranged it all, and put it in between the birds into my head, yes, I sent the man to the mill, and ordered him to wait until all his corn was ground, and that 's all day at Jenney's mill, and I told Acsah I saw she was tired and heavy-hearted, and she should go to spend the day with her aunt and take her baby to see its grandam, as she calls herself, and when she fain would tarry with me, rather than have any other company, I put on a stern air and said I chose to have it so, and she, poor woman, threw her arms around me and cried, — no, no, I had better forget all that — yes, she went, and left all sorts of charges with the maid what she was to do for my comfort, and bade the children be good and not worry poor dad, who was very tired, yes, I heard her, I heard her from behind the door where I hid to look my last on her, but at length she went, and no sooner had the sound of the horse's feet died away than I called the maid and said I had changed my mind, and should take the children and go away, and she might have the day with her own people ; it made me laugh all inside my head, to think how I told her no lie, for indeed I would go away and take the children, no lie, no, for I am an honorable man, yes, and a good father, but she went with wonder in her eyes, still she went, and now all is ready, I have the

curious knife the Italian sailor sold me long ago, oh in some other life which I have all but forgotten, and I have made it very sharp — what — what noise is that?”

The manuscript broke off abruptly with a blot, as if the pen had fallen on the paper, and began again as abruptly.

“She has come back, Acsah and the baby come back, come back — she says she was all but at home when something, she knew not what, came over her and forced her to turn back — she cried, poor Acsah, and said she came because she must come, she had no choice but come, and then she cried again, and asked why did I look so strange, and why had I put the children in their night gear when it was hardly afternoon, and then came the storm, and in the wind came voices. I knew one of them right well, for it is whispering, whispering always at my back, wait, wait now until I can finish, I must write to my friend the doctor with the quiet eyes for he will understand, he will see that when she was forced to come back, and that not by birds, or by It, for she is a good woman, and one of God’s elect, it shows that God will have her go with me — no doubt her tender heart would break in the horror of it, her little Molly, and stout Neddie, and grave pretty Dorcas, yes, she could not let them go and stay behind, and she must go too, and if there is sin in it as by moments I guess, it is better to be on me the reprobate, than her the elect, and so perhaps damn her to my abode, — no, she shall die as guiltless as the baby at her breast, and I will take her first, that she may not see the little ones die — I will contrive it all so gently, so gently and tenderly, for I am a good husband and a good father, and would be a good man had I been born so that I could be, and yet predestination

argues that those predestined to be damned can do neither good nor harm, for they have no free will — there there there, flap your wings and whiz and buzz and whisper all you will, I won't be hurried, I won't give way and frighten her — no, no, whatever comes I will be as gentle and as tender — oh, Acsah darling, indeed and indeed it is for the best or you would not have come back, well, well I will not delay, let me but sign my name, for I never yet did work I was ashamed to set my name to, I am an honest man and an honorable.

ICHABOD ENGLISH."

And never had the unhappy man signed his name more boldly or more firmly than in this last moment of his piteous clinging to some semblance of reason.

How the end came none may know, and yet one feels that the habit and the instinct of gentleness and tenderness so constantly claimed did not desert him at the last, and that the tragedy was completed without terror to the victims. Possibly Acsah may have been put to sleep, since opium was found in the house, and it was suspected that English was a victim to its abuse. That quiet face looked like one who had died in sleep, but only God and the spirits of good and evil know more than is here set down.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ELIZABETH ROBBINS' LETTER HOME.

"GOOD-MORNING, monsieur le Curé!"

"Good-morning, monsieur le Docteur!"

And their mild little quotidian jest exchanged, the two men laughed in the idle, friendly fashion of men who meet too often to have anything very startling to say at any one time.

"Are you ready to set out for Oberry?" pursued the doctor.

"All ready. Eleven o'clock was the hour for the marriage, I believe."

"Yes, and the feast at noon. My girls, Pris and Margot, are going up in the wagon under convoy of Quasho."

"Ah, yes. Margaret is fond of these little French maids, I believe."

"Yes, she inherits a marvelous aptitude for my father's language, and enjoys the opportunity of speaking it. Here is the chaise; will you step in first, Parson?"

"I'm obliged to you, sir."

And Mr. Robbins, with a ceremonious bow, stepped past the doctor and seated himself in the chaise. A handsome man, in the early maturity of life, with a refined and aristocratic face, eloquent dark eyes, and a mouth that suggested some possible tendency toward

the savory flesh-pots of Egypt ; just enough, perhaps, to give ground for those victories of the spirit over the flesh by which the saints are perfected. A genial man in private life, a courteous gentleman, a scholar wonderful for his time, and an honor to his Alma Mater of Yale ; so tender a husband that his wife mourned herself to death in a few months after his decease, and a father greatly beloved both by his natural and his spiritual children, Chandler Robbins had lived like many another good man to serene old age, and been like them forgotten of a world careless of those in whom it can find no fault, but for a dark shadow, which, falling athwart his life like a bend sinister across an azure shield, makes more vivid the heavenly tint, and yet detracts from its completeness. It was the shadow of John Calvin, that spiritual ogre who stood between so many souls and God's sunshine, and preached the wrath and vengeance of a monstrous and impossible Deity upon those who, innocent of any voluntary disobedience, were to be damned, with no place of repentance, to eternal torments "whose smoke ascends forever and ever, a grateful incense to the nostrils of the Almighty ;" for such was the enthusiastic gloss passed upon Calvin's doctrine by his disciple Hopkins, whose severities Pastor Robbins admired and assumed to himself, and such was the teaching that, meeting his temporal misfortunes in the mind of Ichabod English, overthrew its poise and drove him to his awful deed.

But to-day the pastor goes to marry pretty Alix Bèrgeron to her faithful lover, Jean Daudin, who has made a voyage or two since the day Philip de Montarnaud slipped a gold piece into the bride's hand with "Pour ton trousseau, ma petite," and now a little cottage

is ready, and plenished with such household gear as was rescued in that sad wreck of the home at Grand Pré, or wrought since by the wheels and loom of the busy family ; and to-day is St. Martin's Day again, and fair and sweet as was that other St. Martin's Day, and the wagon, with Priscilla and Margaret LeBaron and little Jennie Robbins, their pet and plaything, bowls merrily along, driven by Quasho, who entertains his young ladies with story, jest, and song to the best of his wonderful ability.

A little in advance nods and sways the chaise, containing the two fathers, and the doctor is saying : —

“ We had letters from Elizabeth last night by the hand of some gentleman traveling from Norfolk to Boston, who was so obliging as to hand them to the master of the packet. Have you heard from your brother lately ? ”

“ No. I suppose, what with his duties to his parish and his household and his studies he finds but little time for correspondence. He wrote me of the birth of the child.”

“ Yes, Elizabeth is very cock-a-hoop over her new honors. Stay, here is her letter to Pris, who handed it to me just as I left the house. Will you read it out for our mutual benefit ? ”

“ If it is no breach of confidence.”

“ Oh, no ; Pris said 't was ‘ the minister's wife ’ that wrote.”

“ And I am glad my sister-in-law feels within herself the obligations of a minister's wife,” said Mr. Robbins, rather severely ; but as the doctor only smiled in reply, he unfolded the little sheet of coarse English paper, and read : —

NORFOLK, *September 11th.*

VERY D^r SISTER. It seems very malloncolly to me Sometimes When I think of our Situation tow loveing Sisters as we are Separated at Such a great distance from each other. I was in Some hopes of your comeing up this fall to tarry thro the Winter but dont know but it wou^d be two hard for D^r Father. I want exceedingly to See you all especially Father Shou^d have gone down this fall had it not been that I have a nursing Baby but hope two next Spring — I feel much Concerned about yow D^r Priffe for we have no mother tho a tender father hope you mind his pious Instruccion o my D^r Sister let me recomend to you Early Piety above every-thing as the Onely Sure foundation of comfort in this life and the Onely foundation of hope When We come to die don't let the Vanities of this empty World take up all your Heart remember that going alone before god and spreading out the heart there has been of happy effect to Some — we are all well Ammi is a little Fat hansome Boy Sister Sally has been here about 2 months is now going home With her Brother — Mr Robbins wou^d join in Love to all the family and to Brother and Sifter Robbins — I subscribe your

most tender affectionate Sifter,

ELIZth ROBBINS.

Regards to D^r Betfy Foster Molley and Nancy Mayhew, Becca Fuller and other Friends.

“Yes, very pleasant, very satisfactory,” remarked the pastor, folding the letter and handing it back. “Elizabeth seems a little homesick, but it is doubtless a consolation to be able to write so fluently and well. I do not myself see any evil in teaching the humanities

to girls as well as boys. I fully intend my little Jennie there shall read and write and cipher as well as her brothers, and not be restricted to her sampler, catechism, and Bible as so many girls are."

"You do not agree with old Father Cobb, then, who, when I asked him to join with some of us in hiring for our girls a teacher somewhat more advanced than Mistress Tabitha Plaskett and her compeers, replied to the effect that the world would have come to a pretty pass when wives and daughters should look over the shoulders of their husbands and fathers as they wrote, and offer to correct such errors in spelling as they might see fit to commit."

"Ha! I fancy spelling was a tender subject with gran'sir Cobb," laughed Robbins, "and Mistress Ammi Ruhama Robbins could have set him right more than once."

"Yes, she spells well enough," replied the doctor, well pleased, "especially as there seems no hard and fast rule about the matter. Most persons vary their spelling of the same word according to their mood or fancy."

"Even my friend the Rev. John Newton, rector of Olney, near London, with whom I have much spiritual delight in correspondence, will now and again indulge himself in certain vagaries of that sort, but the soul or animus of his epistles never falters or checks; and after all it is the spirit that maketh alive, and the letter that killeth."

"And yet, Parson, it seems to me as if it were well for us if we did not stick quite so close to the letter, but gave way more to the spirit at times. Poor Lyddy Cornish, for instance, in her mortal sickness cravingly

desired to be admitted to the church, and to partake of the Last Supper of the Lord ; and because the poor soul was too feeble to leave her bed and personally appear in the church, she was refused, and died incommunicate. It was indeed the letter that killed there."

"I was willing," exclaimed the pastor, much disturbed. "I took down her Relation and Confession of Sin and read them to the church, and we restored her to charity ; but two of the deacons were very bitter in opposition to breaking the rule, and the gentler counsels were overborne. Still, her children, you know, were admitted to baptism."

"Yes, and under the Halfway Covenant they would have been so without question, since their parents were baptized."

"Oh, that Halfway Covenant !" cried Robbins, bitterly ; "that notable contrivance of Satan to ensnare souls, and cry to them, Peace ! Peace ! where there is no peace ! It makes me quiver with terror to see persons sitting down at the Lord's Table, and counting themselves of His elect, whose baptism lies under such grievous disability."

"Parson Leonard admitted all to baptism whose parents were baptized, whether they were church members or not," replied the doctor, gravely. "He held that the two sacraments were so conjoined that one receiving baptism was already in the grace of communion, and her child had birthright to membership in the church, and to baptism as its first step."

"I know he did, and I confess to you, brother, that I have had great searchings of heart as to how he shall render account of his stewardship. It is a fearful, yes, an awful thing to be put in charge of the souls for whom

Christ died, and if the shepherd himself opens the door of the fold to the wolf" —

"‘To his own Master he stand or falls,’" interrupted the doctor, with that tact which will not let a friend utter words which he might regret speaking.

"Yes, — ‘to his own Master he stands or falls,’" dreamily repeated Robbins. "And so with you and me as well as with Nathaniel Leonard, ‘It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,’ and few, few indeed shall be saved."

"Parson, what motive, think you, had God Almighty in the creation of man?"

"He created them for His own glory, as doubtless you learned in your catechism."

"Yes, but is not He the fountain of all wisdom?"

"Surely."

"And of all love?"

"Doubtless."

"And power, since by it He combined the atoms already existent, and vivified them into His creature man?"

"Of course, but what" —

"One moment, and you will see. Is it logical to say that the failure of His own work gives glory to God's wisdom?"

"Rather to His justice."

"Is then His justice incompatible with wisdom?"

"God forbid."

"But you believe that under the conditions of their being most men are born but to be damned."

"Under the conditions of their fall in Adam."

"But Calvin teaches, and since him Hopkins, that Adam was predestinate to fall, thus making God the

Author of sin ; and so before the first man was made, the race created by God's wisdom and love were predestinate by His power to damnation."

"Except the elect."

"Except the elect, and they chosen out, not for their virtues, not for their penitence, not for their faith or for their works, but by an arbitrary appointment of God."

"Doctor LeBaron, you blaspheme" —

"Indeed I do not, Mr. Robbins. No man living holds his Maker in more reverence and love than I do ; but I cannot with you place John Calvin and his disciples next to God in my allegiance, and if you will take it from a man old enough to be your father, I think you would be a happier, yes, and a more useful man if you did not do so, either."

"You are indeed an older man, Doctor, and we have taken sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends, and yet I must believe you to be in grievous error. In my belief John Calvin was a prophet commissioned by God to declare his truth, and the Five Points as set forth by him are to me of equal importance with any precept of the New Testament."

"The Five Points ! Do they marry well with the Sermon on the Mount ?"

"They do in the Mind of God, although your mind may not have grasp enough for more than one aspect of the question."

"H'm. Election, including of course reprobation, means that from all eternity some souls are predestinate to salvation for no merit of their own, and some to damnation for no fault of their own. Redemption, that is the saving of the souls of the elect through the Atone-

ment of Christ; but this saving grace, saddled with Particular Redemption, meaning that Christ died only for the elect, and His death is of no efficacy to the non-elect. Then the Bondage of the Will, so that the non-elect have no power of repentance, or of turning to God, or of conviction of sin leading to confession and pardon."

"Esau found no place of repentance, though he sought it bitterly with tears."

"I know, but Holy Writ saith not that he found none beyond the grave. But the fourth point — Irresistible Grace, meaning that the elect cannot resist conversion, even if they would — is, to be sure, a comfortable doctrine for the elect, but of a nature to paralyze the exertions of one who feels assured that no efforts of his own can merit this grace, and no sins can be so displeasing to God as to prevent it in the soul of the elect. And then, as if to clench this, comes Final Perseverance, the gift whereby the elect become impeccable and incapable of falling from grace; and furthermore, this gift being withheld from the non-elect, they have no power of retaining any good they may receive from holy teaching or from holy baptism, so that though they may seem to live a good and Christian life in this world, all merit is buried with them in the grave, and they are judged even more severely at the last for having as it were cheated themselves and their fellows here below by a simulacrum of sanctity. Now, Parson, do you call this exposition of the Councils of God, — Almighty God, who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for its redemption, — do you call it as consistent with Christ's showing of the Father as is the Sermon on the Mount, or the last discourse, as given by John the Beloved Disciple?"

A long silence ensued, broken only by the sweet nonsense of the little birds telling each other that summer had come back and it was almost time for nesting, and the joyous voices with laughter borne on the still air from the merry party in the wagon. At last the parson said : —

“It is easy enough for the carnal mind to become entangled in these subtleties of reason, or rather of false doctrine, and it is thought that Satan was of the cherubim, those blessed spirits who derive wisdom from the Almighty as their especial gift, so it is not to be doubted that he can even now plague men's minds with what appear to be sound arguments against the faith, while all the time they are mere delusions of the enemy.”

“Why not turn round that weapon, and try its point upon the Five Points? To my mind 't will prove the sharpest,” suggested the doctor; but his companion flushed as a man does when he is insulted.

“And still you are a deacon of the church, Dr. Le-Baron,” said he, severely.

“A deacon of the Church of Christ, but not of the Church of Calvin, any more than that of Knox or of Luther, — nay, nor of Rome,” returned the doctor, with animation. “Since the Separatists cut adrift from the old ecclesiastical system, every man is free within certain limits to judge for himself; that is one of the essential consequences of separation, and you know as well as I what the almost imperceptible divergence at their source of two straight lines leads to in the end. I claim to be a thoroughly sound Christian and church member, however unworthy as an individual soul; but I differ from the belief of John Calvin, and in many points I differ from you, and I know men in this town

who differ from all of us, yet what is to be said? We have the open Bible, we have private judgment, we have liberty of conscience, (although you say no liberty of will), and we are free to diverge, each one as conscience guides him. I tell you, Parson, the world does not stand still one instant, and this movement begun some two hundred years since in England will go on, until Christians who could not endure the tyranny of King, or rather Bishop Stork, will run riot under some yet unborn King Log unable even to defend himself."

"I know that the leaven of discontent and rebellion is working in this town," said the minister, bitterly.

"And not only in matters ecclesiastical," replied the doctor, in a lighter tone. "Our good mother of England will have to change her policy right speedily, or she will find that her big boy over here is too stalwart to be laid across her knee any longer. He begins to demand respect and consideration even from his parents."

"One would suppose that the Colonies' emphatic rejection of the Stamp Act would have sufficed as a hint to the old mother," said Robbins, entering with an air of relief upon the new topic.

"The English mind is not very quick at imbibing new ideas, or in perceiving when it is best to abandon old ones," and a little French smile crept across the doctor's thin lips.

"Well, we are as English as they," replied the parson, promptly. "And in the course of a century and a half have got the idea of liberty so thoroughly worked into our heads that I doubt if all King George's armies would suffice to knock it out."

"State and Church are indeed divided here, are they

not?" remarked the doctor quietly. "You, a man of peace, are all but ready to grasp the carnal weapon in defense of political liberty, but you call in John Calvin, with gyves and fetters and small cords, and beg him to bind you fast and sure in such slavery of the soul as the Pope never dreamed of enforcing. But there, I have done. Here we are at Bèrgeron's; and see how they have trimmed even the outside of the house with garlands and greenery."

"A trifle too much for my taste. It savors of Merry Mount and its maypole."

"Chut, chut, Parson! Claim a little liberty of soul, and rejoice with them that do rejoice, as your Bible bids you. Remember the Guest at Cana."

So Parson Robbins married Jean Daudin and Alix Bèrgeron, in phrases of such pure French that neither of them knew what he was saying; but the next Sunday he preached a sermon of such severity, that it was long and regretfully remembered by the more liberal part of his congregation, especially his statement that he considered the Five Points of Calvinism of equal weight with any part of the New Testament.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SUCCATACH.

CONSIDER HOWLAND slept with his fathers on Burying Hill, and Ruth Bryant, his loving wife, had meekly followed him thither. You may see their stones to-day, in the shadow of that majestic though mistaken monument to the memory of John Howland the Pilgrim, who married Elizabeth Tilley, and not Elizabeth, daughter of childless Governor Carver. There too may you see a plaintive little stone to the memory of

CONSIDER SON TO MR. CONSIDER
AND MRS. RUTH HOWLAND,
AGED 7 YEARS.

and also another, of which we will speak by and by. But besides those who lay with them on the Hill, Consider and Ruth had several children, who remained in the houses at its foot, and principal among these was Thomas Southworth Howland, named for his grandfather Thomas, son of that sweet widow Alice Southworth, who with her two boys crossed the seas to marry her first love, Governor William Bradford.

But although Tom, as his father called him on occasion of that notable betrothal of Tom's sister Lucy to Captain Hammatt, sometimes got his whole name, his townsmen, who were for the most part his kinsmen as

well, were generally content to call him S'uth'ard, and sometimes Tom S'uth'ard, following a fashion still prevalent in Plymouth, of distinguishing different claimants of one family name by the middle name, so that nothing can be more bewildering to a visitor of to-day than to try to make out why she must n't gossip about A B to Y Z, until some one exclaims: "Don't you know that they are sisters? They are both daughters of Mr. X."

"Then why are n't they both called Miss X?" asks the aggrieved gossip.

"Oh, there are three A Xes in town, and we always speak of them by their middle names," is the reply, and the stranger sighs: "Oh, carry me back to Kalamazoo, where nobody is related to anybody, and nobody has any ancestors."

But to return to our sheep. S'uth'ard Howland, some years before his father's death, had taken to wife Abiah, daughter of Squire Hovey, so called because he was a lawyer. They lived in a house between Judge Lothrop's and that built by Doctor Francis LeBaron, and as neither Abiah nor S'uth'ard could look out of window without seeing the home of the other, the match may have been one of propinquity, for Abiah was not nearly so pretty as several other Plymouth maids, of her age; not pretty at all, in fact, but, what is better, she was very good, and when her husband's parents died it was she who mothered the two little orphan girls, Experience, commonly called Peddie, and Hannah, who in her sweet flower of beauty divided with Priscilla LeBaron the meed of "fairest."

Like his father, S'uth'ard, with his wife's efficient aid, kept a sort of amateur hostelry in the house built by Consider, during his later years, on North Street, next

below the corner where we found him living in the old home of his father Thomas. And here we may assist at a little family council held beside a roaring hickory fire, pleasantly illuminating Mrs. Howland's own sitting-room, and dispelling the chill and darkness of a December twilight.

At one corner of the fireplace sat the mistress, spinning fine flax upon the wheel once used by Joanna Cole, mother of Consider, who had bequeathed not only this wheel and both houses and land upon Cole's Hill, to her descendants, but also her good old English name, a favorite in the family to this day, although sometimes contracted to Joan.

At the other corner, upon the high-backed settle, shielding them from the wind creeping in at door and window, cuddled Peddie, Hannah, and Priscilla LeBaron, warming their toes after a run in the snow, and whispering secrets of state in each other's ears, with much giggling and smothered exclamations and expostulations.

A big brown dog lay across the hearth, keeping an eye upon Priscilla, whom he had escorted hither, and intended to escort home in good time for tea, or rather supper, as both he and she called it.

Much stamping upon the doorstep, a robust entrance with a slam of the front door and throwing open of that of the sitting-room, and S'uth'ard Howland entered in his usual breezy and somewhat aggressive fashion.

"See here, Abbie! I've got something to show you and to tell you. You kittens clear yourselves off to the kitchen, and plague old Rose's life out. Priscilla's lad is waiting out there — scat!"

"I don't believe it is a good plan to speak that way

to a girl as young as Pris, S'uth'ard," expostulated Abiah, as the door closed behind the three little maids and their sweet ripples of laughter.

"Don't you believe it, Abbie! Girls nowadays are n't what they were while you and I were the age of these. But see here, you've heard of the Old Colony Club?"

"Why, yes; have they asked you to join it?"

"Not they, — they're too fine, though Edward Winslow's my own cousin, and Pelham my second, and the others are kith if not kin. But what I'm coming at is, they are going to celebrate Forefathers' Day, the 22d of December, you know, and they want we should get them up a dinner in the old Forefathers' fashion. They want to come to us, because they know as well as I do that when they talk of the Forefathers there is n't a man-jack among them that can claim a Mayflower name as I can, except the Winslows; and though I may be have n't spent so much time over my books, and don't always wear my cambric ruffles, and talk like a French dancing-master, as some of them do, I'm old John Howland's grandson, and they know it, too."

"What shall we have for dinner?" asked Abiah's gentle voice, and her husband, quieting down from the fume into which he was very apt to talk himself, stared at her a moment, then, pulling a paper from his pocket, sat down beside her, and smoothing it upon his knee began studying it by the firelight, while he said: —

"Oh, that's all made out. I was just passing their hall up there in Town Square, when some one thumped on the window fit to break the glass, and then Tom Lothrop came pelting down the stair, and begged me civilly enough to come up and help them; and among

us we drew out this ticket, — bill of fare they call it, — and I took a copy and promised we'd get it up; and they asked me to come to the hall and spend the evening, and I said I would, as why should n't I?"

"You should surely, if you like it, and are asked," replied Abiah, quietly.

"And Doctor LeBaron has given the club Governor Bradford's own chair, that came to him with his second wife, and Isaac Lothrop, the chairman, is to sit in it. If I'd belonged to the club, may be I should have given our old John Howland table to go with Bradford's chair."

"But the bill of fare, husband; won't you read it out to me?"

"Why, it's what I brought it home for, woman! Only you talk so much. Here it is now, in nine courses: —

"1. A large baked Indian whortleberry pudding.

"2. A dish of 'sauquetach' as they spell it, but I guess corn and beans and pork and chicken spell succatach any day in the year; well —

"3. A dish of boiled clams.

"4. A dish of oysters and a dish of codfish.

"5. A haunch of venison roast by the first jack brought to the Colony, — I forget whose it is, but no matter.

"6. A dish of sea-fowl.

"7. A dish of frostfish and eels.

"8. An apple pie.

"9. A course of cranberry tarts and cheese made in the Old Colony.

"There, Abbie, that's a regular old Forefathers' dinner, is n't it? Oh, and Isaac Lothrop says we must have five grains of parched corn beside each plate, be-

cause in the old times there was a famine, and five grains of corn was the allowance for every soul for a day."

"It is a marvel if they throve upon such low diet," remarked Abiah, calmly; "but it is a dinner easily to be cooked, husband, and I will do my best to have everything as it should be."

"And good is your best, wife. The moil of it is they want to be so fine and Frenchified that they've set their dinner for half past two o'clock. I told them I did n't know as our kitchen chimbley would carry smoke at that hour of the day, seeing it had never been tried."

"I guess it will, S'uth'ard."

"'T would n't put you out any if it did n't," replied S'uth'ard, half annoyed and half admiring. "Were you ever out of sorts in your life, Ab? *I* never saw you so."

"It's best that one of us should be pretty quiet," said Ab, with a smile so significant that S'uth'ard's stentorian laugh reached the merry maids in the kitchen, and made them laugh for sympathy.

So thus began the revels of the Old Colony Club, whose annals are one of the most charming mines of Old Colony lore remaining for a later generation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE LAST OF THE RINGS.

IT was spring, and upon the chill air of melting snow and icebergs floating off the coast, and the discontented east winds, stole the breath of the epigæa, pushing its rose-tinted and spice-laden clusters of blossom up through tangles of wintergreen and beds of sodden brown leaves, and beside gnarled stumps of trees dead, once and for all, while she, the darling of the Pilgrims, who called her Mayflower, lived on from year to year, ever renewed in boundless continuity of life. Yes, the epigæa was in bloom, and Priscilla LeBaron and Hannah Howland, in pursuance of a deep plot laid the day before, had risen early and crept forth from their respective homes with the secrecy of conspirators, to go and gather the earliest clusters before Abraham Hammatt or Joshua Thomas should be before them ; for in those days, a custom akin to that of St. Valentine's Day with its gloves obtained in Plymouth, and the young man who wished to stand especially well with some young lady suggested his preference and obtained a certain claim upon her indulgence by presenting her with the earliest Mayflowers she had seen. Naturally, that spirit of coquetry occasionally to be met even among the maidens of Plymouth inspired those who expected this offering to make every exertion to forestall it, and when Strephon called with his little offering Chloe loved to point to a similar one at her elbow, and say : —

"Oh, I'm sorry you took the trouble, but you see I have some already."

So Pris and Nanny, as they called each other, crept out of bed and out of the house as early as the sun, and each with a good bit of bread in her pocket, and Billington Sea waiting for them to drink, gayly took the road in that direction, much delighted at their own courage and finesse.

The bread was eaten, a certain portion of the sea was quaffed, and the two pretty maids were growing a little tired, but still the baskets were not filled, for the epigæa, although abundant, was not fully bloomed; and in those days one scorned to gather the little hard buds now sold at every city street corner, and bearing the same resemblance to matured Mayflowers that a tiger cub born in a cage does to the king of the jungles.

"There'll be more over toward South Pond," exclaimed Nanny at last; "but I'm so tired, are n't you, Pris?"

"Tired? Yes, I suppose so, but I'll have a bunch of Mayflowers to show Abe to-night if I perish in the attempt."

"Oh, well, in that case we'll go on," and Nanny, who was of a more fragile mould and constitution than her friend, straightened her back, and desperately breasted the steep hill lying just beyond Little Billington.

"I'll tell you, Nan; since you're so tired, I'll go alone straight on toward that dead oak where we made a fire last fall; don't you remember?"

"Yes, you can almost see it from here."

"Well, I'll go as far as there, and if I find Mayflowers I'll hail you to come; but if not, we'll make it do with what we can find between this and home. You sit down here and wait."

"I'll just poke round a little here in the bushes first; mayhap I'll chance on some we have n't seen yet."

"As you will, only don't stray away." And Priscilla, light and tireless as a bird, was out of sight in a moment. Hannah, more tired than she confessed, sat still for a little while, listening to the innumerable sounds of life that make the awakening forest eloquent, from the faint rustle one sometimes catches as the fronds of a fern unfold, or a bee brushes in and out of a pale, sweet spring blossom, to the liquid song of the bluebird and the querulous note of the robin, who open the concert soon to be swelled by the golden shower of the bobolink's ærial song and the glory of the oriole.

The call of an early thrush from the swampy valley behind her attracted Nan's attention, and with its subtle note of invitation seemed to call her to his side. Almost involuntarily the girl obeyed, and with a smile upon her lips began descending the slippery hillside, saying half aloud:—

"You want to show me where the Mayflowers are, don't you, birdie?"

And to be sure, just at the foot of the hill a cloud of rosy color showed a patch of blossoms whose delicate perfume already rose to welcome her. Poising herself upon an exposed tree root, Nan essayed to spring across a little gully dividing her from the tussock where these grew, but in the act was startled by the cautious movement of some large creature in the thicket behind her. A tradition of wolves, a certainty of Indians, dangerous if intoxicated, a panic such as lies in wait for feminine perils, rushed across Hannah's mind, and with a little piteous cry she jumped short of her mark, and fell, one foot deep in the boghole, the other crumpled under

her, her hands clutching all unconsciously at the Mayflowers amid which she had fallen.

An exclamation in a deeper tone blended with her own, and out from the thicket leaped, not a wolf nor an Indian, but a tall, dark, and very handsome young man, who, striding across the boggy ground, reached the tussock almost as soon as Hannah, and without much ceremony raised her and placed her upon her feet, saying,

“I hope you will forgive me, Miss Howland, but” —

“Oh! my foot!” and Hannah, clutching at the young man’s arm as the only available means of support, turned so ghastly white that in very charity he put an arm around her waist and helped her to sit down upon the hillock and lean upon his shoulder.

“My ankle is sprained, — perhaps broken. I can’t stand at all,” whispered the girl. “Call Pris — call Miss LeBaron as loud as you can!”

“She’s coming! She had turned back just as you fell — this way! Here! Miss LeBaron, this way!”

And Priscilla cautiously approaching the edge of the boggy basin, stood speechless before the sight of her friend fainting in the arms of a young man, totally unknown to either of them.

“What has happened? What is it?” demanded she, in that sort of indignation with which many natures meet the incomprehensible.

“I’ve sprained my ankle, Pris,” moaned Hannah, keeping back a sob.

“Poor Nan! And who is, — who — excuse me sir, but how came you here, if I might ask?”

“I came to gather Mayflowers,” replied the stranger, with a half smile, “and happened to be at hand when Miss Howland fell. The question now is of taking her home, and first of getting up yonder bank.”

"Can't you walk at all, dear?" asked Priscilla, a little sharply, for it hurt her own maidenliness to see her friend lie upon this stranger's breast so helplessly and unresistingly.

A 'no,' so faint and chill that it failed to reach the ears of the listener, formed itself upon the sufferer's white lips, and the stranger indignantly echoed it.

"No! If she could stand she would not allow — I will bring her up the bank, if you will kindly hold the bushes aside."

And as Priscilla, abashed she knew not why, obeyed, the young man added in a lower tone, "You will pardon what would be a strange familiarity, were you not helpless." And raising Hannah's slight form firmly and tenderly in his arms, he strode across the bogholes, landed safely upon the firm ground, struggled up the hill, and finally seated the poor girl on the same log where not fifteen minutes before she had rested so placidly and well.

"Now if you will sit beside her, I will hasten to the village for help," said the young man, glancing anxiously at the sufferer, who hardly seemed conscious.

"I can go quicker, I know just where to go and who to call, and — and it would make talk for a stranger to go about the town with such a tale," said Priscilla, coloring brightly as the idea of all the probable gossip came into her mind.

"Yes, you go, Pris, and let Quasho come and take me to your house quietly," murmured Hannah, and Priscilla, casting a severe and comprehensive glance at the stranger, replied, —

"I suppose, sir, you will stay — she does not need any help. You might be picking your Mayflowers, only stay within call."

"I am not a rascal, Miss LeBaron."

"No, but you are a stranger," replied Priscilla, naïvely voicing the sentiment of her native place; and then with a whispered word or two to Hannah, and an uneasy glance at her attendant, she ran away through the wood as fleet as one of the wild creatures which fled before her, and as light as the birds who gravely questioned from tree to tree as to what these droll mortals might be doing now.

Some moments of profound silence ensued, broken by Hannah, who said with a sorry attempt at calmness: —

"You are a stranger here, are you not?"

"I am a sailor on board Captain Samson's brig, the *Lydia*," replied the young man in a constrained voice. Hannah looked at him again. "Captain Samson was at our house last night, and said that all his men were townsmen, but I don't think I ever saw you. May I ask your name?"

"They call me Jack."

"But your family name?"

"We poor sailors don't have family names, but I know yours, Miss Howland."

"You do! How?"

"I have often seen you in Plymouth. It is n't likely you would notice me. If you will not think it a liberty, I will tell you why I was in the woods this morning."

"To gather a posy for some young lady, I suppose," said Hannah, a little startled, yet interested.

"Yes, I will show you." And diving down into the little dell, the sailor presently returned carrying a basket filled with the odorous pink flowers glistening with dew.

"Oh, what beauties, — finer than any we found!"

"Yes, it made me feel bad to see you picking what I had n't thought good enough to offer you."

"Oh, — me — you mean" —

"They were for you. I sent you some last year."

"Those beauties! They were from you?"

"Yes, — you 're not offended?"

"N-o-o. But — who are you?"

"Let me throw out these poor things in your basket, and put in what I have picked. They are so much finer."

"Yes, — if you picked them for me."

"Indeed I did, and wherever I sail all over the world, I mean to be back here in Plymouth to pick the first Mayflowers for you every year, until" —

"Until when, Mr. — Jack?"

"Until you are married."

"Oh, that may never be."

The sailor made no reply, apparently absorbed in exchanging the contents of the two baskets, and carefully preserving every sprig that Hannah had picked.

"I hear the wagon coming!" exclaimed Hannah, with an air of relief.

"Yes, and that is Captain Samson's voice," replied the sailor, — "I suppose they met him and asked his help."

"Well, — he won't object to one of his men helping a poor crippled girl, will he?"

"No, Miss Howland, but" —

"Hi! Dere's Miss Hannah, now!" exclaimed Quasho's voice; and guiding his horse between the trees and over the bushes he presently appeared, with Captain Samson on the seat beside him.

"Miss Prissy say she waiting for you at de house,

Miss Hannah, an' Mas' Cap'n here passin' 'long jus' den, an' berry kin'ly offer he help fer tote Mis' Hannah inter de waggin, an' nobody else knew noffin 'bout it."

"You here, Ring!" exclaimed the Captain, sternly.

"Yes, sir, I was lucky enough to be near when Miss Howland hurt herself, and stayed with her."

"Ring!" echoed Hannah, faintly.

"Yes," replied the sailor, bitterly. "The only one left alive of Ansel Ring's family that Mother Crewe cursed, and all the name I have is Jack. 'Tis what I signed on the books, Captain."

"Well, well, — it don't matter to this young lady, and I have n't told the men."

"My service to you, Miss Howland," and uncovering his handsome head, Ansel Ring picked up his basket of Mayflowers and disappeared in the wood.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SOME OLD RECORDS.

"It is not physic that you need, Parson, but a quiet mind."

And Doctor LeBaron drew his shaggy brows together, and gazed disapprovingly at his pastor, who, resting his fevered brow upon his hand, sat idly at the study table, laden with record books, manuscript sermons, letters, and papers.

"A quiet mind, — peace!" echoed he, wearily; "it awaits me in the grave, perchance, but not this side."

"Ah! That's a comfortable state of mind, for a man not yet in middle life. What will you say when you have doubled your years, and still not come to mine?"

"I never shall see that day, Doctor. Few and evil are the years allotted to me, and yet it may well be that they are but entry to worse, infinitely worse."

"You're vexed over the Halfway Covenant, I suppose."

"It is one symptom of the fatal sickness that has seized upon this church. At the last church meeting, where you did not present yourself" —

"Having to superintend both a birth and a death in one afternoon."

"Doubtless, doubtless; but I laid before the people, with all the fervor I could command, the terrible danger

they incur by this practice. Deacon Bartlett replied that it was "an old ancient practice," and that it was not well to change such, but I bade him remember that the Church Records show it to be a practice introduced by my reverend predecessor, and even then more by way of concession to human frailty than of ordinance, and I put it to him and all of them, that in these days of laxity and heresy, it was for Christ's people to strengthen the bulwarks, and stand every man with his weapon in one hand and his mattock in the other, even as the Hebrews when they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, harassed at every step by the sons of Belial."

"H'm. You can't stop the world turning round, Parson."

"What? Do you call heresy progress, Doctor Le-Baron?"

"Nay. I do but state a scientific fact. And what about the music?"

"There again they withstand me. But I spent the time when others slept last night in entering all these matters in the parish Record. Here — read for yourself."

And with the feverish languor of an overwrought nervous system, the minister dragged a long leather-covered volume from under the manuscript of a half-written sermon thrown aside in disgust, and pushed it toward the doctor.

"There! Read the two or three last pages, and see if the prescription for a quiet mind is writ down upon one of them by any chance."

"Tit for tat is fair play," replied the doctor, fumbling in the pockets of his wide-skirted coat, "and here is a news-letter brought down from Boston, by the

packet this morning. It contains stirring matter, and requiring more immediate action, on both your part and mine, than even the Halfway Covenant. There, lie back in your chair and put your feet on this, while you read."

"I cannot suppose that temporal matters deserve such — ha!"

And the parson, who had received the little coarse brown sheet rather scornfully, paused abruptly, and became so absorbed in its contents as not to perceive the little smile with which, and a pinch of snuff, the doctor applauded his own method of treatment.

Then opening the record book, he turned the pages, reading bits here and there before coming to the last entry, as for instance, how Sister Esther Jackson asked privilege of baptism for an orphan infant adopted by her, but was refused because the child was without birthright. Afterward, however, upon her urgent insistence that the child had become as her own, it was allowed baptism on the birthright of its adopted mother.

Brother John May was requested, in 1764, "to set the tune in concert, in order for the better, more regular, and decent carrying on of that more heavenly part of the worship of God, viz., singing in the house of God."

In 1770, the church split upon the question whether to exchange the Version of Psalms sung in meeting, either for Watts's Hymns, or those of Tate and Brady, which had been upon trial for three years, and *some* thought it time to come to a determination. One church meeting, called to discuss this question, broke up because it was "such an extreme cold day," and nobody had ever yet dreamed of such luxury as heating the meeting-house!

Another meeting was broken up by the intemperate language of some of the brethren, Deacon Foster asserting his belief that Dr. Watts composed his hymns under the direct inspiration of the devil. Finally, however, those who hated Watts "condescended" to Tate and Brady, which Mr. Robbins himself preferred, and it was finally agreed to try the latter hymnal for six months longer without any psalms. But it was not until 1777, that Jesse Churchill, Andrew Crosswell, Samuel Sherman, and William Bartlett were chosen to act as "Choristers in Publick Worship as Occasion requires," thus proving that a male choir is a Congregational, and not a High Church practice!

Jane Tinker was warned that "her conduct has been so contrary to y^e Gospel, and caused such grieffe and offence to several of y^s Ch. that they cannot comfortably set down with her at y^e holy ordinance of y^e Lord's Supper, & She be desired to refrain from Coming until she gives Christian Satisfaction, *i. e.* publick confession."

Whether Jane preferred the shame of this public confession to the unknown terrors of excommunication, was not registered; but apropos of the matter, the pastor had set down a long discussion as to the propriety of these public confessions being entered upon the church records, some members contending that to hand down the sins with the name of an individual to an unlimited posterity, was quite too severe a punishment; while Mr. Robbins, with certain others, held that the example of penitence was very efficacious to those still in sin but disposed to repent, and cited the Confessions of Saint Augustine and the story of Mary Magdalene as having been of great use to many. "Falling into sin is shame, but confession is no shame, while it is great shame if

one does not confess ;” and finally the pastor cites the case of a woman who was well known in the town to have been a grievous sinner, but who became converted, and was “propounded for Communion,” but it not being known, because not recorded, that she had made publick Confession, caused great uneasiness to many, until by personal inquiry it was found that she had.” And “Sister Lydia C. made publick Confession of intemperate drinking and was restored to Communion.” Another minute mightily tickled the doctor’s sense of humor, as proving the wonderful liberality of a church which refused a dying woman’s plea for the sacrament and a helpless infant’s plea for baptism. “1770, Aug. 12. Lord’s Day. The Ch. at the request of Mrs. Trenholme, wife of Mr. William Trenholme, a regular member of the Church of England, who has lived in y^s town nigh a 12^{mo}. and is a person of sober life and conversation ; voted : That whereas Mrs. Trenholme was admitted to occasional Communion with y^s Church on y^e Lord’s Day at y^e Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, & now desires Baptism for her Infant child, that her Request be granted, and that she be hereafter admitted to occasional Communion with us in Special Ordinances. Unanimous vote of assent. Memo. This vote was passed professedly with a view y^t it may be seen by after Generations that this Ch. does not renounce, but is very willing to hold Communion with regular Members of y^e Ch. of England.”

“But would the Church of England be very willing to hold communion with us?” asked LeBaron, half aloud.

“Eh? what?” replied his companion, abstractedly ; and the doctor, merely waving his hand, turned another

leaf, willing that his patient should forget, in the news of the day, those questions that vexed his righteous soul overmuch, calling forth such a bitter cry as this.

“For though all freely charge themselves with being criminally negligent in Discipline of y^e Church and care of y^e children of y^e Church, nobody will do anything now at this present. The Lord give us all a heart to repent and reform in y^e Thing which I believe is one Awful Provoking Cause of y^e melancholly withdrawal of y^e Spirit and comforting Presence of Christ.”

And after the record of a stormy dispute over the Halfway Covenant, he adds, “Oh that y^e All-Wise and Infinitely Merciful Father of Lights would lead and direct y^s Ch. in the way that is pleasing to Him, and the way of Truth, Peace, and Holiness for his dear Son’s sake.”

Next, Dr. LeBaron with much interest read the account of the Ordination of his own son Lemuel over a parish in Rochester, Mass., where Pastor Robbins preached, the Rev. Ivory Hovey of Manomet made the first prayer, and the Rev. Ammi Ruhama Robbins, brother-in-law of Lemuel, the last one. “The whole attended w̃ great Decency & Solemnity; may God make y^e Ordained a rich and lasting Blessing to his people, and a Pastor after His own Heart.”

And finally came the latest record of those unhappy Church meetings to discuss and insist upon the Halfway Covenant and more liberal measures generally, whereat the spirit of opposition and schism so boldly reared its head as to wring from the pastor’s pen these words : —

“Oh y^t God of his Infinite Mercy would Compassionate y^s Chh. under its present divided State & graciously

lead and Direct to such Measures & Conclusions as shall be most for His Glory & y^e real Interest & welfare of y^s dear Ch and People for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

And yet the "little rift" widened and deepened year by year, until in the revolt from the hideous fatalism and hopelessness of Calvin the church planted by the Pilgrims, and watered with their tears and blood, lapsed into such breadth and width of Liberalism as to dispense with all boundaries or limitations except those of morality and good taste. It was a clear perception of this drift, and his inability to stay or direct it, that broke Chandler Robbins' righteous heart and sent him to a premature grave. Poor heart! It could not expand, it could only burst!

But for the moment the patriot came to the relief of the Calvinist, and as LeBaron looked at him with grave concern and perplexity, wondering what drugs to minister to this mind diseased, the minister raised a face glowing with animation and exclaimed, —

"This is wonderful, Doctor, really wonderful! There can be no question now of going back; it is all the same as a declaration of war between the colonies and the mother country."

"And the mother will fare like Deacon Spooner's pig, having very much the same character of unreasoning obstinacy."

"What about the deacon's pig?" asked the parson, with a side glance at the newspaper; but the doctor knew that this would keep, and preferred to make his patient laugh a little to begin with.

"Why, the other day, just as the deacon, in all the glories of a fresh ruffled shirt, polished shoes, a newly dressed wig tied with a smart ribbon, his laced hat on

his head, and his gold-headed cane in his hand, set forth for the Old Colony Club-room, where he had been invited to spend the evening, he espied his fat pig creeping through a hole in his sty and emerging into the alley between North and King Streets" —

"Spooner's Alley, as he calls it."

"Yes, just as I call its continuation LeBaron's Alley. We all love the sound of our own names. Well, it seemed but the work of a moment to overtake and head the creature back into the same breach through which he had escaped, and Ephraim stirred his stumps to do it, calling out at the same time in his pleasant fashion, 'Piggie! Piggie! Here Piggie, this way, Piggie, this way, Mr. Piggie!'"

"The man's voice to a T! Were you there to see and hear, Doctor?"

"I was like peeping Tom of Coventry, in sight but not to be seen," replied the doctor, watching the parson's laugh with professional approval. "Well, Mr. Piggie turned very obediently, but instead of creeping in again at the hole in the fence, rushed past it and out into the street, the deacon in close pursuit, holding on his hat with one hand, for there was a sea-turn on, with a shrewd east wind, and it called for pretty rapid use of those polished shoes to get ahead of Piggie running up the hill; but the deacon is a resolute man as well as a very courteous one, and still as he ran, flourishing the gold-headed stick in one hand and holding on his hat with the other, he never ceased politely calling 'Here, Piggie! Here, Piggie! This way, Mr. Piggie, this way, good little Piggie!'"

"Oh dear! I can hear him!"

"Well, up and down North Street they raced, round

Cole's Hill and back, a little way up King Street, where Simeon Samson, just stepping out of his door, headed him off, and finally straight down the hill to Water Street, the poor deacon scrambling and slipping after, much to the disadvantage of those shoes as I am sore afraid, and not without a tumble or two. Arrived at the bottom and picking himself up, the deacon looked about him, and behold! Mr. Piggie, with the air of a gentleman taking a walk, was trotting down Lothrop's wharf, grunting his disapproval of such interference.

"‘I think I have you now, Mr. Piggie, and I will lead you home by your ear with a string tied round it,’ remarked the deacon, fumbling in his pocket for that piece of whipcord I have heard him boast of always carrying. I strolled along in the same direction, for in fact there is no air to be found more salubrious than that at the end of Lothrop's wharf" —

"Especially in a sea-turn in December," remarked the parson, wiping his eyes.

"Exactly. Well, the deacon found his whipcord and made a running noose at one end, then gently stepped up to Piggie, who stood contemplating the water with a certain ominous twist to his tail, as one who screws his courage to the sticking-point.

"‘I have you now, Mr. Piggie, and you won't get away in a hurry I do assure you,’ exclaimed the deacon, making a final stride upon his prey; but no sooner did his hand touch the creature's neck, than with one wild grunt of defiance he made the final plunge, diving off the wharf in such a hurry as nearly to carry the deacon with him, and striking out with his fore feet, which at every pass scratched his own throat, and in the end would cut as deep as the knife which in some vision of the night he had doubtless seen awaiting him."

“Actually jumped off the wharf!”

“Actually; and as it was just the turn of the tide, and the ebb setting out like a mill-stream, he was no sooner in the water than out of reach. The deacon stood and looked after him for a moment, then rolled up his string very carefully and neatly, and replaced it in his pocket. By that time he had recovered his breath and his manners, and taking off his hat, he bowed until its brim touched the ground, shouting, —

“‘Good-by, Mr. Piggie! A pleasant voyage to you, Mr. Piggie! No doubt you know your own business best, but in my tuppenny-ha’penny judgment you’ve made a very poor departure. Still, you have my best wishes, my ve-ry best wishes!’ And putting on his hat again he trotted off down Water Street, and I hid behind a shed till he was gone.”

“Well, Doctor, I have n’t laughed as much since our French friends were here, and it has done me good.”

“If there should be trouble between the Colonies and England, we may see our French friends again,” remarked the doctor, significantly.

“Say you so! You hear from them sometimes?”

“From Philip de Montarnaud as often as occasion serves. He writes to Margot in French.”

“And there will be trouble — there *is* trouble! Why, the seizing these cargoes of tea and throwing them overboard is equal to a declaration of war. England will never sit down under such an insult!”

“A people who take such a step as that are prepared to go all the way,” replied the doctor, sententiously. “Such men as John Adams at the head of the movement, and John Hancock, Henderson Inches, and Benjamin Austin, the committee chosen to warn the con-

signees of their peril, do not, like the deacon's pig, plunge into deep water and cut their own throats to escape being led by the ear. If it comes to a struggle, the New England will beat the Old, and if she can't do it alone, the French will help her."

"And so moderate as they showed themselves!" exclaimed the parson. "Not an article injured or taken away, save only the accursed thing for which they came to seek. Did you mark this incident, Doctor, of the Mohawks passing a house where Admiral Montague was passing the evening, and he opening the window to call out as they went by, 'Well boys, a fine evening you've had for your Indian caper, but mind you, the fiddler is yet to be paid!'"

"And Pitts called back, 'Oh, never mind, Admiral, never mind! Just come out here, and we'll settle the bill in two minutes!'"

"Yes, but if he had gone out, there would have been no harm done. These men are patriots, not rioters," said the doctor, proudly, and glad am I that my sons are stalwart men, and my daughters the mothers of boys. They will conquer a peace that shall build up a new country here in the wilderness, and they, unlike their father, are the sons of this land."

"Yes, and I too have sons and daughters, and though I be a man of peace, I may pray to the God of battles that the cause of the righteous may prosper."

"Do so, Parson; you may keep the paper. Good day to you."

CHAPTER XXX.

HOW THE HOUSE OF LEBARON REJOICED.

“ Now, you Sylvy, beat dem eggs up good ! Miss Prissy’s weddin’ cake ain’t a-goin’ ter be slighted long as ole Phyllis is to de fore. Here, Marcy, you put on you sunbunnit an’ run down to de store fer quarter pound nutmegs. W’ere’s dat young one got to now, Sylvy ? ”

“ W’y, aun’ Phyllis, does you disremember dat you sen’ her a-flyin’ ober to Mis’ Lyddy’s to git her hearts an’ roun’s, an’ ’fore dat inter Mis’ Bart’s ter see if Mis’ Marg’et in dere ? ’Pears like dat pore lil’ chile ought ter be sot on wheels ; it’s ‘ Marcy, run here, an’ Marcy, run dere, an’ Marcy, run dis way, an dat way, an’ toder way,’ from sun-up till dark, but don’no as I ever heerd ‘ Marcy, put on you bunnit an’ go to dame-school to larn you letters.’ ”

“ An’ I donno w’ats comin’ to dis yere pore ole worl’ w’en de lil’ niggers has got to have book-larnin’, an’ dere mammies can’ spen’ time to do dere wuk ’cause dey’s got so much growlin’ ter do. Wish’t now I had n’ done ’greed to go an’ lib wid Miss Lyddy an’ let you come here, you pore mis’able shif’less cretur, dough I’s free to ’fess I could n’ no way stan’ hevin’ a Harlow sot ober my head, I dat’s alluz b’longed to de LeBarons. Well, well, de Lord kin fix it all up to suit hese’f, I ain’t got nuffin’ ter say. Now, den, gimme dose eggs, no, you

come an' kin' o' trinkle 'em in, drefful easy, w'iles I beat."

"Mis' Prissy showed me her weddin' gownd w'en I was up thar makin' her bed this mornin'," observed Sylvia with an ingratiating air, as she held the bowl steady for Phyllis to scoop out the last of the egg with her fat forefinger.

"Um — yes, Miss Prissy mos' too good-natured fer her own good," mumbled she. "Bet you did n' see dem leetly tonty w'ite satin slippers dat come all de way from France fer 'er."

"Yes, I did; Miss Marg'et was in de room, an' she took 'em out an' showed 'em to me, an' she sez, sez she, 'De gen'leman dat I's gwine fer ter marry done sen' dese yere,' sez she."

"Don' b'lieve a word uv it," declared Phyllis jealously. "I ain't seen no sech a t'ing, an' 't ain't likly dey 'd show 'em to a strange nigger like you."

"Oh, I guess dey 's layin' out to s'prize you wid 'em all to wons't w'en dey gets de weddin' suit all sot out on de bed," suggested Sylvia with a deprecatory and ingratiating manner, for "ole aun' Phyllis," as she had come to be called, was supposed to hold some mysterious sway over the minds of "de w'ite folks" in whose service her life had been spent, and to be able to make or mar the position of her fellow-servants according to their favor in her own eyes. And truth to tell, Phyllis's temper at this time was in a condition necessitating a good deal of caution on the part of her assistants, for great changes were taking place in the home she had always felt to be hers for life, and old people, be they black or white, do not love change and instability.

Priscilla was about to marry Abraham Hammatt,

whose father the Captain was recently dead, and was to go home with him to that pleasant old house near the corner of North Street, where later on, the first Bank in Plymouth was established, with Lydia LeBaron Goodwin's son, William, as its cashier. The old house still stands, with B A N K in iron letters across its brick south end, and despite the prosaic uses of to-day, one may fancy Lucy Howland and her Captain, their son, with sweet Priscilla LeBaron and those later occupants of whom we may speak by-and-by, flitting in and out the low-browed door, peeping through the windows, or gazing in wonder at the electric cars that pass their old habitation.

Dr. LeBaron, thus left alone with Margot, who showed no genius for domestic affairs, had engaged a competent housekeeper named Harlow, whose prospective authority Phyllis so vehemently defied that "Miss Lyddy," as she still called the doctor's oldest daughter, albeit the young Goodwins were already men and women grown, had arranged with her father to exchange Phyllis for Sylvia and her little girl Mercy, or as she was always called, Marcy, whose father was "young Pomp," given to Lyddy on her marriage, and now no longer either young or junior of his name, for Pompey the elder lay resting from his labors upon Burying Hill, with a gravestone at his head, whereon LeBaron had inscribed : —

"Glory and shame from no condition rise ;
Act well your part, there all the honor lies."

Lydia Goodwin had, as we know, a talent for administration, and when her husband brought home Sylvia, a good-looking young negress, to succeed Violet in the position of cook, she at once informed her that she was

to be married to Pompey, a step which would make things comfortable, both as regards morality and domestic arrangements. Sylvia, trained in the family of Dr. Cotton Mather to strict and silent obedience, made no reply to this proposition, but Pompey, who had expanded under widely different influences, ventured to remark that he was "tentive to Mas' Cotton's Chloe," and preferred his own taste to that of his mistress. But Lydia with good-humored peremptoriness made short work of such absurdities, and a few days later called the two chattels into the parlor, where Mr. Robbins with smiling face and book in hand stood ready to marry them.

The ceremony over, and an awkward pause ensuing, the parson said with grave jocularity: "Salute your bride, Pompey!" But he, after one glance at the sable expectant face, stepped back, and executing a marvelous bow, replied: "Arter you is manners fer me, Mas'r Robbins," and poor Sylvia was not saluted at all. But she had a new gown, a big wedding cake, and a husband, so no complaints were heard.

A few months later, Nathaniel Goodwin thought best to send Pompey to sea, in a short-handed schooner, and he was away for a year or so. Returning unexpectedly, he sauntered up from the wharf and around the house to the old stoop, where years before he had lain on his stomach to hear Uncle Quasho's story of his kidnapping. Here he found Sylvia busy in the wash-tub, from which, at sound of footsteps, she turned her head without removing her hands; recognizing her husband she resumed her rubbing, saying carelessly, —

"Dat you, Pompey! Got back, ain't you?"

"Got back fer shore. Well, Sylvy, how's you fin' yerse'f?"

"Indipperent, t'ank you, Pompey. How 's you he'lf?"

"Fusrate."

And seating himself upon the step, Pompey helped himself to apples from a basket standing near, and eating them in generous bites, threw the cores to the ducks who waddled and quacked about the steps, precisely as their ancestors had done.

Sylvia washed, and sung in her sweet shrill voice one of Tate and Brady's hymns, whose melody attracted Marcy from her play by the kitchen fire, and brought her toddling out. At sight of the child, an instinct of politeness moved in Sylvia's heart, and breaking off her hymn but not stopping her washing she remarked:—

"I'll make you 'quainted wid Marcy, Pompey. Done got her baptize inter de chu'ch."

"Sho!" replied the father, pausing with a half an apple in his mouth, to contemplate his offspring. "S'pec's Miss Lyddy awful tickled to get 'nodder nigger wi'out payin' fer her."

But this is a digression, and we come back to the statement that Phyllis and Prince had now become Goodwin servants, while Pompey with Sylvia and Marcy were made over to Doctor LeBaron, who retained Quasho as his personal and confidential attendant to the day of his death.

He it is who, with white head but a vigorous and peremptory step, now appears at the kitchen door.

"Folks is jes' here, Aun' Phyllis."

"Sho! How many dis time, Quash?"

"Fur's I kin make out, dis 'stallment is Mis' Joe dat was, an Mas' Joe's Mis' Sally, an' her husban' Mas' Hazen, an' a picaninny or two, an' Mas' Lem from Mattapoissett an' he bride, I s'pose de young mistis is.

Any way dey 's close aboard, jes' a-stoppin' to pass de time o' day wid Mas' Bart's folks, an' Mas' Doctor sen' me in to tell you."

"Now wa'n't it a mussy I done got dat cake all tucked up nice in de oven an' de door chock tight!" ejaculated Phyllis, hurriedly washing her hands and wiping them upon the tow roller-towel. Now, you Sylvy, don' you look tor'st dat oven till I come back, but gib you best 'tention to de dinner, an' soon as dat Marcy o' yourn come in sen' her up chämber ter see if Miss Prissy don' wan' some arrant did."

And Phyllis, who had hurriedly tied on a gorgeous new bandanna turban, hastened upstairs to see that all was ready for the guests, who were to crowd not only the doctor's house but that next one, once the home of Joseph and his wife, but since his death, of his brother Bartlett LeBaron and his family. Joseph's widow, whom we remember as Sarah Leonard, had in her widowhood found a home at Haverhill, where her daughter Sarah, at the age of fifteen, was married to William Hazen and went to live in Newburyport.

But when stirring Lydia Goodwin came over to her father's house to arrange with him about Priscilla's wedding, she found him resolved upon one point around which all other arrangements were to be adjusted. Every one of his sons and daughters, and every one of their children, was to be invited to spend a week as guests of the head of the house, and those for whom room could not be found in the family mansion he wished to have invited by Lydia, and by Bartlett, or as a last resort to be placed at the house of S'uth'ard Howland, who was now to be reckoned as one of the family, since Isaac LeBaron was at last to marry Martha

Howland on the same day that Priscilla married Hammatt.

"I want to see them all, Lyddy, all," reiterated her father. "I want to judge for myself whether I've been a benefactor to my race or not, before I leave the world. Planting trees is all very well, but I have planted a family, and I want to review it now that all is over."

"Over, father! You're not ailing again, are you? Why don't you take some physic?"

"Throw physic to the dogs, Lyddy, but don't let them lap it up, poor fellows."

"Why father, you always gave physic to sick folk while you practiced, did n't you?"

"Oh yes, abundance of it, Lyddy, abundance of it."

"Then why not treat yourself as well as your patients, father?"

"I treat myself better, child, and let it alone. I've seen the folly of it, and I wish you could see the folly of a woman's trying to argue. Sit you down now and make out a list of invitations, and Pris shall write them out in her pretty Italian hand."

"Well, of course there's Mr. Goodwin and myself and our children, with Nat's wife, and my Lyddy is engaged to Thomas Lothrop."

"Never mind him, I'm not responsible for him, but — yes, Lyddy may bring him, just to make the little witch happy; and Nat's wife, she was Molly Jackson was n't she?"

"Why of course, father."

"Excuse me, my dear, but after remembering all the marriages of one's own children, one's mind is apt to wander a little when it comes to the next generation. Well, there's you and Goodwin, and your Nat and his

Molly, and your Lyddy and Tom Lothrop, and your other children. Then comes Mary and William Bradford and their children, they 'll all come, Bristol is not such a long way from Plymouth. Then Hannah and Ben Goodwin will come down from Boston, and Elizabeth" —

"Teresa comes next," interrupted Lydia, but her father sadly shook his head.

"I shall never see Tressy again. She and Lazarus will not come from Barbadoes, and Joseph is dead, but you must send for his little girl, who married a Hazen, t'other day, Sally her name was I remember, after her mother Parson Leonard's daughter, sweet soul."

"Yes, father, the Hazens."

"Well, Bartlett lives next door, and that finishes your mother's children. Then comes Isaac, who is to be married at Howland's, and then come on here for his supper, and Elizabeth Robbins with her Ammy Ruhamas senior and junior, — I shall be as glad to see Bess again, as of anything in this world; then Lem and his young wife will come from Mattapoissett, — perhaps Pris will like to have him help Parson Robbins to tie the knot, — and poor Frank is dead in South Carolina, and only Billy is left of the boys, who but yesterday were the torment of the town. Well, well, — yes, get them all together, Lyddy, every one of them, and every chick and child, and even their sweethearts; didn't I hear that Billy had one?"

"Yes, sir, he is promised to Sarah Churchill, daughter of John Churchill and Sarah Cole, you know. She has a fine lot of land on Main Street tacked to her petticoat, from her mother's side."

"Oh, well, ask her too, and now, Lyddy, I'm going into my study for a while, so good-by."

Although so abruptly dismissed, Mrs. Goodwin lost no time in injured feeling, but carefully revising her list, she went to seek Priscilla, and direct her to write out the invitations in her best style, but found her reading a letter with deepest attention.

"That's Sally Sever's handwriting," exclaimed the elder sister in a detective sort of tone ; "what mad prank is she proposing now ?"

"Mad prank ?" repeated Priscilla, folding up her letter and putting it in the bosom of her baby-waisted cotton gown, "Well, she's going to be married, that's all."

"I think father ought to look over those letters, — I've more than a mind to tell him so." And Lydia, who was thirty years older than her pretty sister, stood and glared upon her with such severity that Priscilla, blushing and laughing, ran out of the room to lock up her friend's letter, which, lying here before me yellow and tattered, yet forever young, proves that girls were just as merry, and just as silly, a hundred and twenty years ago as they are to-day. But in her haste Priscilla had dropped another paper, which Lydia pounced upon, and read aloud with slow and scornful emphasis. It was headed —

"On the friendship of Miss Hannah Howland and Priscilla LeBaron," and ran as follows : —

"Hail, beauteous maydes, whome friendship binds
In softest yet in strongest ties ;
Soft as the temper of your minds,
Strong as the lustre of your eyes.
So Venus' doves in coples fly,
And friendly steer their equal course,
Whose feathers cupid's shafts supply,
And wing them with resistless force.

Thus as you move love's tender flame
 Like that of friendship paler burns ;
 Both, our divided passion claim,
 And friends and rivals prove by turns.
 Then rest yourselves and bless mankind,
 Friendship so curst no more pursue,
 In Wedlock's rosy bow'rs you'll find
 The joys of Love and friendship too."

Beneath was written, —

"It is the first time my muse has ever brook silence,
 but" —

"Sister Lyddy! Aren't you ashamed of yourself, reading other people's letters, and, — give it to me!" And with much the air of an angry ring-dove, Priscilla, who had flown into the room in time to catch the tone of the reader, snatched the paper from her hand, and stood gazing at her with eyes full of that unlimited scorn, wherewith young people regard the misdemeanors of their elders.

"You tell Abr'am Hammatt I'm as sorry for him as ever I was for the toothache," replied Lydia, quietly, and leaving the matter of the invitations for the moment, she went out to talk with Phyllis, but safe upon the other side of the door she muttered, —

"Hannah Howland's all well enough, but she is n't a patch on Priscilla LeBaron!"

However, the invitations were written that night, and sent by friendly hands or paid messengers, for this was before the post-rider had been seen in Plymouth, and when the day arrived, the guests assembled, a bright and merry crowd of every age, from the doctor himself, to his youngest grandson, a sturdy little fellow in the arms of Sarah Hazen, at whom her grandfather looked long and often, not so much because she was a remark-

ably beautiful woman, as because through her father she had inherited the face of the doctor's first wife, and the old man, looking at those dark blue eyes, rosy mouth, and complexion of cream and roses, albeit joined to a resolute line of brow and chin, saw the vision of his own lost youth, and the dream that had seemed to him in those days a vision direct from Paradise.

"You have a handsome wife, William Hazen," said he, as the young man came up to make some courteous remark to his host.

"Yes, sir, and as good as she is handsome," replied the happy husband.

"She tells me you are thinking of removing to Nova Scotia. What's that for?"

"Partly, sir, because, like the man in the Bible, I have bought a piece of land, and must needs go and look after it, that is to say I have invested largely in lands near St. John, but partly because I do not sympathize with the spirit of rebellion and anarchy which seems taking possession of this land."

"Hm! A Tory, are you?" demanded the doctor, with a fine smile, and producing his snuff-box. William Hazen looked at him inquiringly, then making the most of his stately figure, answered gravely, —

"I am loyal to my King, Dr. LeBaron."

"Hm — yes, — well, I would go and look after that piece of land, if I were you, and hark'y, grandson-in-law, I'd go pretty soon. Do you take snuff?"

"No, sir, — I" —

"No? Well, I do." And the doctor inhaled a pinch with great relish. But in his will he left the sum of fifty Spanish milled dollars to Sarah, wife of William Hazen.

And so the evening came, and with it the Rev. Lemuel LeBaron, from Mattapoisett, who, as it were, held the candle for Dr. Robbins, as he made fast the knot which only death was to dissever between Abraham and Priscilla, while Isaac LeBaron and his hour-old bride stood by and shared the blessing and the festal joy, so mingled of family affection and that strange new element that enters into family life when one member calls upon all the rest to rejoice with her because she has found one whom she loves far better than them all.

Next to his two new married children stood the doctor, leaning upon Margaret's shoulder, and unconsciously presenting a picture which those who saw it loved to speak of in after years, describing with loving reverence the majestic and unbowed figure of the old man with his pallid face and snow-white hair and the keen blue eyes, upon which had passed no touch of time, and the noble features shrewd and kindly, yet instinct with a nobility that upon the face of his grandsire had no doubt been hauteur. Contrasting with this stately figure the piquant loveliness of the girl shone forth like that of some sweet bright blossom nestling beside a stately ruin; her rich coloring contrasting with his pallor, her clustering and audacious curls with the soft whiteness of his hair, her lissome and dainty figure with his grand immobility, and the vivid darkness of her eyes with the frosty blue of his.

"Mas' an' Miss Margot looks as ef 't was dey was de show, an' Mis' Pris an' Mas' Isaac an' deir goin's on was jes' a kind o' entertainment, same as de daughter o' Herodias' dance 'fore Herod," observed Pompey to Quasho, as the two prepared to bring in the great salvers

of refreshments to be served as a sort of prelude to the wedding supper.

“Don’ think Mas’ Isaac look much like Herodias’ daughter, an’ I don’ know as Mas’ Doctor’s killed more lil’ chillen dan any odder gen’man in’de parfesion,” replied Quasho sourly, for the poor fellow’s heart was heavy in seeing this great family gathering and his master’s thoughtful looks at one and another.

“’Pears like he studyin’ how dey ’ll look walking mourners to his fun’ral,” muttered he, as waiting for Pompey to precede him, he gazed through the crowd at the master in whom his own life was bound up, and the whips and syllabubs upon his tray had to wait until the faithful old hands had dashed away the tears blinding the bistre-colored eyes.

“Dere’s no fool like an ole fool,” muttered he, once more raising the salver and preparing to enter the room; but a light step sprang up the steps, and a blithe voice, whose accents of merry mockery he knew full well, replied:—

“Thou’rt always right, my Quasho, but lament no more, for my wisdom hath come to help out your folly, and all will be well.”

“Oh, Lordy!” gasped Quash. “Now de las’ one’s a-goin’, an’ mas’r an’ me’d better be goin’ too.” And once more laying down his tray, he stepped to the parlor door and sonorously announced—

“Mas’ Cap’n de Montyno.” And only one person in the room was not taken by surprise.

Later in the evening, sitting in the little study with his host, the new-comer said,—

“Yes, sir, if England pushes the matter to an issue,

my friend the Marquis de Lafayette and a legion of brave fellows are coming over to fight upon this soil for the liberty and justice banished from our own fair land ; but I — I could not wait for events, or for Lafayette. I am here now, to fight if need be to the death against every foe for liberty, justice, and — Margot ! ”

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DOGS OF WAR LET LOOSE.

It was Sunday in January of 1775, and the people of Plymouth were assembling in their meeting-house at the foot of Burying Hill, the same house in whose construction Parson Leonard had so mightily rejoiced. The congregation embraced nearly all the adult inhabitants except the handful who still held out in the schism, occasioned by Mr. Leonard's fanaticism, and who occupied a house in King Street, or, as we call it, Middle Street, much to the discomfiture of Deacon Spooner, who wanted their land to put into his garden, and got it too, when the malcontents decided in 1783 to come home again previous to that more vital division ensuing at the death of the Rev. Chandler Robbins, when the men of his way of thinking drew off and became the Church of the Pilgrimage, and the majority became Unitarians naïvely calling themselves the First Church in Plymouth.

Shades of Brewster and Faunce and Cotton and Robbins, what say ye?

But in 1775, the First Church, still Orthodox in name and tenets, assembled itself beneath its hundred-foot-high spire with a gilded weather-cock on top, and, muffled in great-coats, cloaks, shawls, and furs, for no sybarite had as yet suggested fires in a meeting-house, prepared itself to listen with a divided mind to Parson Robbins' eloquence. A divided mind, for on Saturday

evening, despite the Sabbatical severity which made that period more sacred even than Sunday evening, it had been first rumored, and then boldly affirmed, that George Watson, that wealthy and honored townsman whose magnificent linden trees, on North Street, we still admire, had accepted a commission from the Crown as Mandamus Councillor, tempted to it no doubt by Governor Hutchinson, whose son Elisha was recently married to Watson's daughter Mary.

"He rode down from Boston yesterday, carrying the accursed parchment in his pocket," said one man to another, and the other muttered, "Judas!"

For in those days, the man who accepted office under the British government was held in Plymouth somewhat more in abhorrence than was the Jew who became publican and collected the Roman tax from his countrymen, and not all of Colonel Watson's honorable antecedents, or the high position of his family, or his wealth, or his stately presence, or his genial fellowship and courtesy to friends and neighbors during a life of more than fifty years, could counterbalance the patriotism that like a sacred fire burned in the hearts of the men of Plymouth already organizing to fight for the liberty their Pilgrim sires had conquered for them before.

From mouth to mouth the bitter tidings were spread, until even upon the church steps a stern resolution was taken, and instead of waiting there as was the custom until the minister had gone in and the bell ceased tolling, every man passed into the church and took his seat at head of his pew. Through the midst gently stepped the pastor, wondering somewhat at this innovation; the bell clanged out its last summons, and with it the stately figure of the Mandamus Councillor, dressed in the rich

clothes and laces proper to a gentleman of that period, carrying his three-cornered hat and gold-headed cane in one hand, passed up the aisle, the wintry sunlight striking through the southern windows upon his well-powdered head, his mulberry-colored coat, and the delicate lace ruffles at his breast and wrists. Those who looked at his face said that it was white as his hair, and that his dark eyes had in them something of the hunted and desperate look of the stag who stands at bay ready to hopelessly fight to the death.

A sudden silence fell upon the place, something deeper and more pregnant than the reverent stillness of the house of God; even the minister risen in his place to make the opening prayer paused, and stood gazing down upon that imposing figure as if it were that of some messenger to be heeded even before the call to prayer. Stumbling a little as he entered his pew, the Councillor dropped his cane, and as if the clang were a preconcerted signal, almost every man in that house arose, opened his pew door, and forming two by two in solemn procession, passed down the aisle and out of the church, one pausing at the door to say aloud, —

“We cannot worship with Judas.”

The man so rebuked, so degraded from the high position his but yesterday, stood and looked about him, his pale face growing ashen to the lips, his eyes filled with an agony of pain and shame.

A sea of frightened women's faces, of wondering children's eyes, and yes, — a few men, their angry, yet uncertain looks turned upon him. Edward Winslow, John Watson, Gideon White, Deacon James Foster, an apothecary named Dix, and two or three more, stood here and there undetermined what action to take, while

the minister above their heads said something to which no one listened. A long, dreadful moment passed, and then the Councillor, who had not sat down at all, opened the door and very differently from the way he had come up the aisle walked down it, and out upon the steps, where knots of men stood talking in suppressed but vehement voices. As he appeared, those in his path drew aside, but none looked at him, none spoke, and passing through their midst with head uplifted and scornful eyes, Watson went his way down the hill and along the Main Street, and through North to his own house, nor was he seen again until the next morning, when he rode out of the town upon the Boston road, and his neighbor James Warren, with generous alacrity, told every one that Mr. Watson had decided not to accept the office of Mandamus Councillor, and was gone to Boston to say as much to Governor Hutchinson.

"And right glad am I to hear it," said Isaac Lothrop, heartily, when the news was told to him. "George Watson is a man one *has* to respect, and if he hold opinions one cannot respect, it throws everything into confusion."

But once convinced of his error, Watson was too brave and too just a man to try to disguise his conversion, and when summoned with about a dozen more to account to the Committee of Vigilance appointed by the town, for his opinions and action, he at once subscribed the declaration of loyalty to the common interests and obedience to the provisional government, demanded of him, and became in the end a loyal and honest patriot, although never a democrat in principle or practice.

But from this time began a new epoch in the social history of Plymouth; the patriots, or Whigs, as they

were called, headed by James Warren, whose name was to become so famous in the annals of the Revolution, held the government of the place, and demanded that all men should range themselves openly upon the side of resolute resistance, armed and deadly if necessary, to the tyrannous policy of Great Britain ; should subscribe to certain formulas of allegiance, and be ready to answer to military summons. A small minority, perhaps a dozen men in all, set themselves in bitter opposition to all this. They found nothing oppressive in the Stamp Act, or the Tea Tax, or the Boston Massacre : they called their townsmen rebels and insurgents, and prophesied their speedy punishment and suppression ; they loved to speak in public of the divine right of kings, and especially of his majesty George III. and the royal family, as objects of reverence and awe. From the club room and the taverns the dispute penetrated to the church, and Deacon Foster, in an animated discussion at church-meeting over a sermon of Parson Robbins, from the text " Put not your faith in princes," called his townsmen a " pack of murderous rebels," whereupon Deacon Spooner rose, and mildly inquired if " Brother Foster " knew what was the precise sin whereby Moses lost his entrance to the Promised Land.

" He was too much set up in his own opinion," returned Foster readily ; but Spooner, who was celebrated for his courteous and winning manners, gently replied : —

" Nay, brother, but it seems to me it was because he called the Lord's people *rebels*, and so proved himself a rebel to his own Master."

And then John Churchill arose with glowing face and tremulous voice, to relate how Deacon Foster had called

Churchill's wife by a very bad name, because she upheld the patriot course in his presence, and to state that he for one would never sit down again with him at the Lord's table, until he had apologized; and one after another joining in this decree of excommunication, the pastor formally requested the deacon to abstain from presenting himself for communion until he had publicly professed contrition for his abusive language, both to the patriots and to Mrs. Churchill.

From words, the warfare came to deeds, and the baser sort of men in both parties seized the opportunity for inflicting upon each other those ferocious practical jokes which remind one of the sports of wild beasts.

A tory named Dunbar, bringing the carcass of an ox to market in spite of warning, was tied up in it, and so carted out of the town; some persons were tarred and feathered; many were brought to the liberty pole in the town square, and forced to sign a recantation of their opinions and language. One Sunday morning, as the men stood collected before the church, a noted Tory of the town appeared among them, hatless, breathless, and stammering with excitement, holding something in both hands and calling out:—

“A miracle — a miracle! Heaven has declared itself openly on our side!”

“What is this unseemly disturbance upon the Lord's Day?” sternly demanded Parson Robbins, turning back from the step he had already mounted.

“Look for yourself, parson; look and read!”

“What is this? A hen's egg?” asked Robbins, bewildered, as his parishioner carefully laid the object in his hand.

“Yes, warm from the nest; I just gathered it,”

panted the owner, who, to do him justice, was perfectly sincere.

"It is curious — most curious," muttered the minister, closely examining the egg; and then raising his head he said aloud, "It is quite true, my friends, that there are words traced apparently beneath the surface of this shell, and they read: "'O America, America, Howe shall be thy conqueror.' Look for yourselves."

All crowded around, and the egg passed from hand to hand, most faces growing pallid and disturbed at what the Tories loudly claimed as proof of the Divine will and intention. But Deacon Spooner, after a close examination, stepped up to James Warren and Isaac Lothrop with his usual ingratiating little bow and said, "It seems to me, brethren, that there is a little knot (not) in the shell just here between 'shall' and 'be,' proving as I fancy, that this is one of those mysterious sayings which the foolish will seize upon blindly, but wiser men will ponder until they find its hidden meaning."

"I don't know as I quite follow the deacon," remarked Jacob Cook, who had pushed himself into the little group, "but it don't seem likely to me that the Almighty would preach through an old hen. I guess we 'd better go into church and listen to Mr. Robbins."

"Very sensible advice, Cook," replied Lothrop, "and I for one shall act upon it."

It was some months after this that General Gage, requested by the Tories or Loyalists of Marshfield to protect them, sent down a detachment of troops called the Queen's Guards, under Captain Balfour, and this gentleman proving a genial and well-bred companion, was received with open arms, not only into the Loyal-

ist society of Marshfield, Duxbury, and Kingston, but Plymouth, where he and his officers often presented themselves, greatly to the annoyance of the patriots, and to the disapproval of the cooler heads among the Tories, who feared popular tumults; and not without reason, as was seen upon one occasion when a member of the Committee of Vigilance, finding an officer annoying a young girl in the streets, used some personal violence toward him, whereupon the officer drew his sword and menaced the Vigilant, who, however, soon drew to his assistance a crowd of eager patriots, whose threats seemed so serious that the officer sought shelter in the shop of the druggist Dix, and would have escaped at the back, but found a detachment of Vigilants awaiting him; returning to the front a parley was called, and in the end the officer was obliged to surrender his sword, which was immediately broken into bits beneath the feet of the patriots, who then retired quietly, leaving the mortified lieutenant at liberty to retire.

Soon after this, Balfour and his officers were invited to dine with Edward Winslow, in his fine new house on North Street, and all the Tory gentlemen of the town were summoned to meet them. The dinner set at the ultra fashionable hour of two was an admirable one, for Mrs. Edward Winslow was Hannah Howland, and so came of a race of noted housewives and delicate cooks, in the days when no lady disdained to put her own hand to the engine of man's content and domestic satisfaction. The dinner was good, and the wines were good, and a great many loyal toasts were proposed and honored, until at last Captain Balfour magnificently proposed to march his 'Queen's Guards into Plymouth the next day, and take measures to punish, not only

those rebels who had molested his officer, but all who declined to take an oath of allegiance to his Majesty George III. Most of the guests, heated with wine and the pride of loyalty, vociferously applauded this resolution, but John Watson, sitting next to Captain Balfour, shook his head and remained silent; the captain noted this and presently inquired in a low voice: —

“What is your opinion, Mr. Watson, upon this matter?”

“I do not want to see the war begin in Plymouth,” replied Watson, who loved his wife, the beautiful Lucia Marston, and his little children.

“You think the rebels will fight!” exclaimed the Englishman, in surprise.

“They ’ll fight like devils, sir,” replied Watson, with an odd mingling of pride and detestation in his tone. But although the Queen’s Guards did not come to Plymouth, Plymouth shortly after this went to them, for a rider covered with dust and grime galloped his spent horse into the town one morning, and announced the battle of Lexington and Concord, told of Paul Revere’s ride (fancy the hearing it as the news of the day, and not as a legend!), told of the “embattled farmers” of Concord, of the Percy’s ignominious retreat, and of the men who, slain by the panic of their own retreat, fell down in their red coats beside the road and died of heat and exhaustion, or fell panting among the fields of finger-high wheat waving in the soft south wind of that 19th of April, 1775.

“Our men killed! Our houses burned!” cried the patriots of Plymouth. “Then it is time for us to take measures with these gentlemen at Marshfield, lest they try the same game upon us!”

And all that day and night the old town was alive with glancing lights, and hurrying men, and the clash of arms, and sobbing prayers of women, until with the morning light a great body of militia and volunteers, embracing several hundred fishermen then in port, marched out of Plymouth under command of Colonel Theophilus Cotton, with banners flying, drums beating, bells ringing, and all the town on foot to cheer them, and bid godspeed.

Perhaps the finest company in the regiment, or rather the little army, for as it passed on through Kingston and Duxbury, its dimensions swelled beyond counting, was one commanded by Captain Abraham Hammatt, whose noble figure and majesty of port were so great that a child of the epoch said in his old age that he was a big lad before he doubted Captain Hammatt's being the governor of the State. Above his head waved a brave silken banner wrought by the fingers of Priscilla his wife, and in its shade marched not only his own workmen and 'prentice lads, but sailors who had served under his father and honored the name of Hammatt, and many of his townsmen, who would not have taken the word of command from less honorable and trusted lips.

Another company under Captain Nathaniel Morton and happy in the services of Doctor James Thacher, proceeded from Marshfield to Roxbury, and joining the provincial army gathered there, served through the war.

But the great Battle of Marshfield, looming like a *Fata Morgana* upon the horizon, was doomed never to be fought except in that fair land of *It-Might-Have-Been*; for General Gage, foreseeing very probably the action of

the men of Plymouth, sent hasty messengers and a transport fleet to Marshfield, so that when the Old Colony force marched into the town, the Queen's Guards were hurriedly embarking, and as Colonel Cotton had received no orders from the Provisional Government to capture an unresisting foe, he simply allowed them to fly, not without a gentle allusion or two on the part of some of the less dignified of the volunteers to the swaggering and insolent conduct of the Guards during their late visit to Plymouth.

And so the dance began, and the untrained, un-moneyed, inexperienced sons of the Pilgrims set themselves, as their fathers had done, to contend for the Right against the Might of the most powerful nation in the world, and, like their fathers, to succeed in gaining what they fought for.

CHAPTER XXXII.

“HURRAH FOR DAWSON!”

“GOOD-MORNING, Quash; fine morning, boy.”

“Yes, Mas’ Nat, berry fine mornin’, sah, an’ ’scuse me, sah, you berry fine, too.”

“Well, yes, Quash, yes, I suppose a uniform is a little more striking than citizen’s clothes. You see they’ve made me a major, Quash, and I’m going up to Cambridge to-morrow to take my command. How — how — how do I look, Quash?”

“Oh, berry gran’, Mas’ Nat, berry gran’ indeed! Look jes’ like a lion, Mas’ Nat.”

“A lion, you dunderhead! What do you know about lions? You never saw one.”

“Oh, yes, I have, Mas’ Nat, seen him an’ hear him sing, often ’nough.”

“When you were a baby in Africa?”

“No, mas’, but jes’ here. Ain’ dat a lion Mas’ John Watson bring down f’um Boston, t’oder day?”

“That? Why, that’s a jackass named Lion, you fool, and you’re just such another.”

“Oh, no, ’scuse me, mas’r, I ain’t got no new uniform, I ain’t no lion nor noffin. Mornin’, Mas’ Nat.”

And Quasho, bowing like a dancing-master, passed on to the barn of the old house where Major Nathaniel Goodwin and Molly, his wife, now reigned, in place of the first Nathaniel and Lydia LeBaron, although that

majestic widow still dominated the house and her daughter-in-law. Fuming a little over the old negro's privileged humor, the major, soon to be a general, passed on and around the crest of Cole's Hill to take a look at the shipping, the legitimate occupation for certain hours of the day of all old Plymouth mariners, then and now. But at the foot of King Street, which the major carefully called Middle Street, his stately progress was violently interrupted by collision with a body not so heavy as his own, but infinitely more rapid and impetuous in its progress.

"Hullo, Samson!" cried the soldier, recovering his equilibrium, "Don't run me down as if I were a British cruiser, man!"

"Ask your pardon, Mr. Goodwin" —

"Major Goodwin, if you please."

"Oh, ay! Men grow so fast these days. But I want to make out those sail yonder — I just went back to the house for my spy-glass, and — Aha, aha!"

"What is it, Captain, what is it? Are the British upon us?" And the major rubbed his hands together and fairly danced with excitement.

"Yes, it's an armed brig flying the British colors, and making in past the Gurnet. Ha! Barnes and Dyer have both caught sight of her, and are closing in, the one from Manomet, and t'other from Kingston. There'll be a fight, and here am I stuck ashore like an old woman! Another week, and the Independence will be afloat!" And the captain, smiting his thigh with his fist, indulged in some of those sounding oaths which in that day were the sailor's privilege.

"Here! Let me look while you blow off your steam," demanded the major, seizing the glass, while

from the house hard by came Deborah, with a kerchief tied round her comely head, and the light of battle in her eyes.

"Is it a Britisher, Sim?" demanded she, with a neighborly nod to Goodwin.

"Yes, — and I ashore!" growled her husband, eyeing his spy-glass in the major's hands with impatient longing.

"There's Weston's pinnace down at Peck's wharf. You might find half a dozen men and get out there! Dyer would give up the command if you could get aboard! You're first naval commander of the Colonies' forces, and have the right." And the sailor's wife shot a proud glance at Major Goodwin, who with the glass glued to his eye replied, —

"You're right, Mrs. Samson, your husband is the first naval officer commissioned by our new government, and I wish with all my heart the Independence was afloat and in commission as well. I'll warrant, Samson, you'd give an account of that fellow — hark!"

The sullen roar of heavy guns and the eager reply of smaller metal nearer at hand came drifting down the bay, and the hoarse cry of hundreds of human voices upon the hill, upon the wharves, lining the shore, and racing along the water's edge made reply. Samson all but snatched his glass from the major's hand, leveled it, and presently cried out, "'T is Dawson himself! I know his signal! He's reconnoitring our harbor. Well shot, Barnes! — down comes his topsail, and there's a sugarplum from Dyer that makes the splinters fly! No, Deb, I could n't get there — there's no wind, and they'll do for him — let them have the credit — another day 't will be my turn. Ha, poor old Barnes, that's

into you, lad, but give it back, give it back, old fellow — there, there, that's the chat; now again! Oh, if I was but at that swivel gun!"

And now the windows and the flat roofs were crowded with women and children, and flags were run up, and handkerchiefs fluttered, and sweet voices grew shrill with outcry all of one note as it seemed, until at a window of whose but James Warren's house appeared a stately and handsome girl, dressed in all the elegance of costume peculiar to the day among wealthy folk, and holding a Union Jack, which she defiantly waved above her head, shouting "Hurrah for Dawson! Down with the rebels! Hurrah! Hurrah for Dawson!"

Already a mob was gathering, and the angry menaces of those whose kinsmen were at that moment fighting to the death against Dawson and his sovereign, began to rise to yells of execration, when the figure of the bold young Amazon was hastily, perhaps forcibly, withdrawn from the window, and in its stead appeared the gracious face of Mercy Otis, James Warren's gifted wife, as, leaning out, she waved a half-finished banner of her own construction, bearing the colony's colors, while her clear kind voice rose distinct above the tumult.

"Friends and neighbors! I pray you hold my guest excused for her rudeness and her folly! Forgive her for James Warren's sake, as well you may!"

A silence, a hesitation, and then a voice shouted, "Hurrah for James Warren!" and another, "Hurrah for Warren's wife!" and the crowd, after all a crowd of patriots, though untutored ones, took up the cry, gave three good-humored cheers, and streamed away down North Street to Cole's Hill, to find that Dawson had concluded to follow the advice of Hudibras to "fight

and run away," that he might "live to fight another day," as he did, to the sore discomfiture of Simeon Samson.

But although the patriots of Plymouth could forgive the foolish insult of James Warren's guest, those whose lives were risked and blood was shed in the struggle were not so placable, and the captain of one of the little privateers coming ashore that night, wounded just enough to make him very irritable, and grievously disappointed at not capturing Dawson, met the offender as she came from bidding good-by to some of her loyalist friends, and being but a rough companion at the best, he inflicted personal chastisement upon her then and there, shouting with every blow, "That's for Dawson! and that's for Dawson, and that's for Dawson!"

It was not gentlemanly, but there was a certain Homeric justice about it, not altogether displeasing to posterity.

A few days after this, the vigilant eyes always sweeping the horizon from the crest of Burying Hill descried a fleet of sail crowding around Elisha's Point, and evidently making into the harbor.

"There!" cried the royalists in great triumph, "His Majesty's fleet is coming to chastise you rebels. Captain Dawson came to reconnoitre and no doubt is piloting this squandron in."

"In that case we will make ready to welcome him and his friends," valiantly replied the patriots; and forthwith a messenger on Isaac Lothrop's fast horse was dispatched to Monk's Hill in Kingston to order the beacon lighted, and other couriers carried the tidings south and west, so that before two hours were passed the whole country side was roused and men came pouring into town armed with Queen Anne match-locks,

with blunderbusses and muskets, with "pieces" ten feet long to be fired from a rest, with every conceivable weapon, or with no weapon save a pair of ready hands, and a fund of Yankee adaptiveness. Patriotic housewives threw open their doors, and after emptying their larders fell to work cooking of their best to supply the feast of victory; the militia and minute-men assembled in their guard-rooms and formed upon the streets; drums beat, bells rang, trial shots were fired, the town was under arms, while over all the northern sky rolled dense drifts of smoke and flaming clouds from the beacon flaming furiously upon Monk's Hill.

In the midst of this confusion the watchers espied a little cat-rigged boat shoot out from the mouth of Jones River in Kingston, and curtseying gayly to the strong east wind that fain would have beat her back, come skimming down to Plymouth. From the masthead flew a pennant at sight of which Deborah Samson, without removing the spy-glass from her eye, dryly remarked:—

"Captain Samson's coming, and I guess there'll be less capering and more work."

"Wish 't he'd bring the Independence along instead of that cat," remarked Jacob Cook, standing by.

"Independence! Good Lord, there's nothing but Independents here already," exclaimed the wife of the commander. "What you all want is a Regulator, and he's on the wharf already."

"Hark! What's that! What's Captain Samson saying?" demanded the crowd, racing down from Cole's Hill to the water side, and then scrambling up again with the news.

"It's Manly! It's Captain Manly with a lot of British prizes! Hurrah for Manly! Three cheers for

Manly!" "And three cheers for Captain Samson, who had to come from Kingston to tell you the odds between B and the bull's foot," cried Deborah as she closed her spy-glass with a clang and turned back to her house to see that the captain had a savory supper ready when he should reach home.

A few Thomases held out, waiting for ocular evidence of the good news, but with the mass of the people laughter at their own mistaken fears, and joy at their baselessness, replaced the anxiety and strain of the previous hours; and their confidence was proved reasonable when, some hours later, Captain Manly anchored his prizes and himself, very nearly upon the anchorage ground where a hundred and fifty years earlier the Mayflower had spent that terrible winter, and departed in the spring, carrying back neither father nor mother of those hundreds of freemen ready now, as were their fathers then, to lay down their lives for liberty of soul and body.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A WORM IN THE ROSE-HEART.

"MADAM WINSLOW to see me, Marcy!" softly exclaimed Priscilla Hammatt, looking up from the lively letter she was writing to her sister, Elizabeth Robbins, describing the late events in Plymouth.

"Yes 'm, all in her best satin gownd, with mitts on her hands!" insisted Marcy, round-eyed and voluble.

"Oh, well, I will come down." And just pausing to pat the bunches of curls at either temple, and see that the string of her tucker was drawn tight enough to hide all but a tempting bit of her white neck, and that her large-flowered muslin dress did not look crushed or awry, the young wife tripped down the stairs and into the parlor where, amid the beau-pots and the rose-jars, and the china monsters and marine curiosities, relics of the voyages of Lucy Howland's husband, sat a stately dame, whose high-rolled hair needed no powder to whiten it, and whose decided Howland face scorned to disguise the signature Time had relentlessly set upon it. As Priscilla, blithe and bright in her young beauty, came into the room, the elder lady arose, and taking her by the hands kissed her on either cheek, saying, —

"You look as fresh as the May, my dear. All this gunpowder and dust have grimed neither your skin nor your frock."

"I hope not, madam, although I am proud enough

that my husband knows the smell of the smoke and is not too dainty to risk the grime," replied Priscilla with spirit. "I pray you have this chair; it is a thought more comfortable than that."

"Nay, child, I'll have the hardest by way of training. Do you know that we are flitting? Driven out by these very rebels you are so fond of."

"Yes, madam, my husband's cousin, Mrs. Pelham Winslow, was telling us but yesterday," replied Priscilla, somewhat stiffly. Madam Winslow laughed disagreeably.

"Yes, and your husband's cousin, Gideon White, might have told him as well. We Howlands have married into good loyal stock, although as I tell my nephew S'uth'ard there's a perverse streak somewhere in the blood that will to the fore now and again. How is Lucy Howland?"

"My mother-in-law is but poorly to-day, or she would come down to see you, madam."

"Lord, child, you need n't be so stiff with me, nor trouble to put on all these pretty airs of mistress of the house. Lucy Howland was my brother Consider's child, and so my niece, years enough before ever you came into the world or your husband's name was ever heard in Plymouth. The Hammatts are not of the old stock like the Howlands and the Winslows, you know."

"And how soon do you purpose leaving Plymouth, madam?"

"It's not civil for a chit like you to ask questions of a woman of my years, but I'll take care and send you word in time to come down and wave your handkerchief as we set sail; or no — mayhap you'd send your

doughty captain down with some of his sharpshooters to pick us off and capture our vessel."

"I am glad to see you so merry, Madam Winslow."

"Thank you for nothing, little Mistress Hammatt; but there, child, I won't tease you any more, tho' it's as good as a play to see the fire flame up in your eyes and the roses in your cheeks. You look like your mother, Lyddy Bradford; ah, she was a sweet creature, and I was sorry enough when she died. You've never a picture of her, have you, Priscilla?"

"No, madam, and I do not remember her at all," said Priscilla, softly, all the fire of her eyes quenched in tears. "I have only this."

And from a sandalwood box of treasures laid beside the great Bible on the side table, she brought a curious and grewsome ornament intended for a brooch or pendant, in the shape of a golden scroll, upholding a crystal coffin, in which lay a miniature skeleton of fine wire. Upon the black enamel face of the scroll ran the legend

Lydia LeBaron Ob. Oct. 28, 1756

Æt. 37.

"Yes, I have seen it before," said Madam Winslow, returning it with a sigh. "Poor Lyddy! Well, child, I did n't come here to-day to talk about myself, nor your mother, nor even you, but about my little cousin, Hannah Howland."

"Hannah? What of her, madam?"

"That's what I've come to ask you, my dear. What's the matter with her?"

"The matter?"

"Yes, the matter! Don't sit there and stare and go

as many manner of colors as if you were a new-landed dolphin. You're Hannah Howland's most intimate friend, are n't you?"

"Yes, madam, I love her very dearly."

"And see her all the time, especially now that you live next door, as it were, to S'uth'ard's."

"Yes, I see her very often."

"Well, then, what's the matter to make her peak and pine and dwindle as she's doing? Is she lovesick?"

"Hannah Howland is too much of a gentlewoman to have such a word fit her."

"Hoity-toity, my young madam! Set you up for a little bantam partlet, indeed! Abraham Hammatt will need look well to himself or he'll be bantam-hen-pecked!"

"I beg your pardon, madam, if I spoke too hotly, but" —

"Oh, I'm not vexed, mistress. I love to see some spirit in you young things, I only wish my niece had more. You see, Pris, I'm fond of the girl, partly because her father was my favorite brother, and partly because she favors marvelously a picture I used to see o' nights in my looking-glass — don't quite see it now, do you, with your mocking eyes!"

"Oh, madam," —

"Well, 'oh, madam,' be it, only mind you this, Priscilla LeBaron! I was sixty-four years old yesterday, and the morrow of your sixty-fourth birthday I'll come at night and look over your shoulder into your mirror, your face and mine side by side, and we'll see who's fairest."

"'T will be forty years and over, madam, before I am so old. I think you will forget."

“ Oh, no ; I shall be dead, you know, and dead folks don’t forget. I ’ll be sure to come ! There, there, child, don’t turn so white on ’t, perhaps I ’ll have done you a mischief, and I ’d be right sorry ” —

“ No, no — only a sudden certainty came over me that I never should see sixty-four ; don’t let us speak of it, please, dear madam ! About Hannah ? ”

“ Yes, about Hannah. Well, I am silly fond over the girl, and she ’s in a poor way, as any one may see, her father and mother both dead, and her home broken up, though S’uth’ard and Abiah have done very well by her, very well, considering they ’ve children of their own ; but still, I ’ve always felt that Hannah was a good deal the chany vase floating along with the earthen bean-pots, — you know your *Æsop*, don’t you, Pris ? And the long and the short of it is that I want to take Hannah with me up to the Provinces and make an own child of her. My Penelope and Sarah are gone, and I am getting old and need a daughter, especially now that we ’re driven into exile. It’s all very well about liberty and that sort of thing, and you young folks feel that wisdom came into the world with you and is going out with you, and you ’re bound to make a general stir-up while you ’re here, but as for me, I never thought I should not lay my bones up there on the Hill with father, and mother, and all the Howlands from old Pilgrim John, down. ’Sider’s there, and Ruth, and their children, but poor sister Joan and I have got to turn our backs on them all and be buried by the Bluenoses ! ”

She was crying a little now, and Priscilla took up the poor, wrinkled little hand with its jewels and its mitt, and kissed it.

“ There, there, never mind, Pris, I don’t want to be

pitied, it was n't what I came for, but I want you to talk to Hannah and make her go with me. She's told you of course that I have asked her?"

"Yes, she told me."

"And what reason did she give for saying me nay? Tell me now, little Pris!"

But Priscilla, coloring scarlet, only shook her head.

"You won't tell me?"

"I have nothing to tell, dear madam, but I will speak again to Hannah, and see if she is fixed in her resolve."

"That's a good child! And come down the hill and let me know to-night."

"I will, but I'm afraid it will only be another nay."

"Well, well, I'm getting old, and it's all very hard, very hard, and sister Joan says so too; but Gideon White and Edward Winslow hold their heads too high up in the air to hear what little women say."

An hour later, Priscilla sat in the pretty bedroom, with its dormer window looking down the Main Street, which Abiah Howland had quietly made pretty for her husband's sister, and where the latter now spent most of her time. The two girls sat close together, their hands clasped, and talked almost in whispers.

"Oh, Hannah, dear, do go for a while, at least. All this will pass away, and you'll laugh at your own fancies."

"No, Pris, it's no use, no use. I'm lying under sentence of death, and I may as well await it here as up there in the North. And when I die I'd like to lie on the Hill with my kinsfolk — mother is waiting for me."

"Now, Hannah, you're just silly, and what's worse,

you're wicked to talk that way. It all comes of meeting that Ansel Ring, the day you sprained your ankle."

"He's never failed to bring me Mayflowers since." And both girls glanced at a dry bunch of *Epigæa*, hung upside down beside the little mirror.

"I wish your brother Consider would come home," exclaimed Priscilla, rather sharply.

"Why, dear?"

"Because I'd tell him all about it, and I'll warrant he'd soon put a stop to all these fancies. Mother Crewe ought to be shut up in the poorhouse, and Ansel Ring thrown overboard in deep water."

"I think, Priscilla, I should like to be alone and rest for a while, if you please."

"Oh, yes, get vexed with your best friend, — I would! Nay, child, don't look so white! Here, kiss your Pris; remember I'm a married woman now, and have a right to lecture you."

"And I'm just a peevish, froward child, who ought to be lectured. But oh, Pris, oh, Pris, I'm so wretched, and it's borne in upon me that I'm not of the elect, and there's no hope for me here or hereafter, and I don't dare to die, for fear of what's to come, nor I can't bear to live and be tortured. Yes, night and day, night and day, I hear that horrible old woman croaking out, 'I curse you, I curse you both, as I cursed his father and mother!' And poor Ansel fell back against a tree, as white as death, and crying out, —

"'Not her! Not her! Don't curse her! I'll bear it all,' and then I can hear the old witch laugh as she said.

"'You'll have enough, my fine lad, you'll have enough of your own! You're the last of their children, and the dregs of the cup are for you, — but she's too near

to you not to get her share ; ' and then she shook her stick at us, and gabbled over her curses, and I — I suppose I fainted."

" Fainted ! You should have sent Ansel Ring about his business, and come straight home to complain to your brothers. I'll warrant they would soon have stopped her cursing."

" No, no, indeed ! " exclaimed Hannah, her delicate color paling with a new terror. " S'uth'ard is so violent ; and he's vexed enough already with mother Crewe, because she's got her cabin on a piece of his land up there toward Carver, you know " —

" Where she's always lived. Is that S'uth'ard's land ? "

" Oh, yes, it's always been Howland property since old grandsir John's time, and S'uth'ard loves to go and stake out the bounds of his land, and says it ought to be entailed on his little John ; and mother Crewe always comes out and snarls at him when he drives stakes that include her cabin, so I would n't for the world add fuel to that fire ; and Consider has gone to sea — did you know he and Ansel are in the same ship now ? "

" No, why did n't you tell me ? "

" I hate to talk about it, and it is only a few weeks since I heard."

" Hannah, tell me one thing."

" If I can, Pris."

" Do you really love Ansel Ring, and want to marry him ? "

" No, Pris, I don't want to marry him."

" Then why do you let him hang round you, and meet you all the time, and stop and talk with him, and go where you know he'll find you ? "

“Oh, Priscilla, do you mean that I’ve been less than maidenly?”

“Why, no, child, it hurts me to have you speak such a word. No snow was ever whiter, and no lily more delicate, than my Nanny, but the trouble is, dear, that you’re too tender-hearted. This poor fellow loves you to distraction, that’s easy enough to see, but he remembers, as he should, that you are Miss Howland, daughter of one of the best families in the Old Colony, and he’s a poor sailor, with a bad name for his only inheritance, and he dare n’t come forward and offer you his love openly; your brothers would make short work of him if he did, and yet he can’t let you alone, but haunts the woods like a blue jay calling to his mate, and you, as tender-hearted as a dove, must go and answer him, and answer him, until now mother Crewe has stepped in to tie you together with an old-time curse. And there’s Joshua Thomas” —

“Stop, Pris, I won’t hear any more!” And Hannah started to her feet, the color and light of health flaming back into her wan face. “You mean well, Pris, but you are too prosperous and happy yourself to think well of what you are saying. No more now, dear, for indeed I am at the end of my strength. By and by I will come in to see you and sister Lucy.”

“‘Sister’ Lucy! She’s more like your mother, with seven-and-twenty years between you, and she my mother-in-law! But what am I to say to your aunt Winslow?”

“Oh, I forgot. Tell her as prettily as you can that I won’t go. Tell her that I’m a rebel both to King George and her, and she won’t want me.”

“There, now, thank the Lord for a little touch of my

Nanny's old self ! Well, good-by, my pet, come in soon and have some supper with us ; I 'll make you a dish of chocolate, though I cannot give you tea until the patriots let us have some. Good luck ! If you go to Halifax with your aunt Winslow, you 'll be able to drink as much tea as ever you want, and I 'll lay my head that 's what she 's going for."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHAT THE POST-RIDER BROUGHT.

“HOME for your dinner, Captain Hammatt?”

“Yes, little madam Hammatt. Is it ready, and is there a kiss or two to season it?”

“Sweets do not suit with meats,” and the young wife coquettishly slid from the over-confident arm about to encircle her.

“Well, here’s mamma, she always has a kiss for her boy!” and the young man bent to the soft cheek of the mother whom he loved with an historic tenderness. “Come, now, I’ll tell you both some news,” continued he, gayly; “we are a post-town, and are to have an office and two riders, and pay postage to the Continental government, and become a very important place. Mamma, you can write to my brother William every week, if you like, and Pris will do nothing but scribble sheets of foolscap to Sally Sever. Oh, it’s marvelous to see how the world grows, is n’t it, Pris?”

“Marvelous,” replied Pris, dryly, “only I heard the news a week ago in a secret from Eliza Watson, whose father is to be postmaster.”

“William Watson postmaster?” inquired Lucy Hammatt, “well, that’s a good choice; he comes of the old stock, and married with the Marstons of Salem.”

“No doubt it was for his pedigree that he was se-

lected, madam," replied Abraham, gravely, for in spite of his Howland blood, the grandson of the Cornish squire had never quite risen up to the dignity of "Mayflower descent."

"Well, tell us all about it, Abe," interposed Priscilla, hastily, and he, pausing only to kiss his mother's wrinkled pretty hand, replied, —

"Oh, you want coals brought to Newcastle, do you? Very well, then, let me inform you that the Provincial Congress, now sitting at Philadelphia, has established a mail-route from Cambridge, through Plymouth and Sandwich, to Falmouth. It will be run once every week, and, as you know, William Watson, Esq., is the postmaster, and will have the office in his own house, so that you can keep an eye upon it without any trouble. Timothy Goodwin and Joseph Howland are to be the post-riders, and the charge on each letter will be six-and-eightpence, so, my dear Pris, I beg you not to write every week to your friend Sally. There, my dear, have I told you all that you knew before?"

"All, except that the postmaster may send letters free for himself and family, and Eliza will forward all my letters marked 'Paid' and cost me nothing," replied Priscilla triumphantly, but her husband shook his head.

"Nay, wife, that's not honest, and I'll not have it. Our government needs money to carry on the war, and this is one means of raising it. Let the Tories cheat if they will, for deceit is the refuge of the weak, but I and my house call ourselves patriots, don't we?"

"But six-and-eightpence is a good deal of money," murmured Priscilla, rebelliously, while the mother looked proudly up in her son's face.

"A good deal more than your and Sally's letters are

worth, I dare say," retorted he, pulling his wife's ear, "so you will have to send them by private hand as you always have done. As for mamma, I know that Bill will always be glad to pay the postage on a letter from her."

"I have good sons," replied madam Hammatt, quietly, and the captain whispered something in his wife's ear that made her laugh and blush.

Other people as well as the Hammatts were interested in the new post-office, and when, a few days later, Joseph Howland, galloping his horse into town, dismounted at the door of the new office with the dignity and importance of a government courier, and extracting a small package of mail-matter from his saddle-bags handed it to Mr. Postmaster Watson, who ceremoniously received it and withdrew to the recesses of the private office, an admiring crowd of townsmen silently assisted at the function, while not only the Hammatt's, but the S'uth'ard Howland's, the Warren's, the Lothrop's, the Hovey's, in fact, every window commanding the scene of action, was crowded with feminine spectators.

Simeon Samson was among the crowd, and felt an unexpected sprig added to his budding laurels when Mr. Watson, appearing at the little window of his office, benignantly announced, —

"A letter for you, Captain Samson, and marked pre-paid, but as it's in a woman's hand I doubt but there was some hugger-muggery with the postmaster's wife or daughter. Here 'tis."

"It's well she paid it somehow," retorted the captain, holding out his hand for the odd-looking missive, "since there's no woman out of Plymouth whose letter would be worth six-and-eightpence to me."

"How much will you pay, captain, to have me report that dutiful saying to your wife?" asked Nathaniel Goodwin, jovially.

"My old grandsir, Myles Standish, said, 'If you'll be well served, serve yourself,' so I'll go do my own errand, and let my wife open the letter into the bargain;" and turning down Middle Street, or as they still called it sometimes King Street, Simeon reached the old gray house, and stepped, as you may do to-day, directly from the street into the little dusky hall. A door lay at either hand, and across the whole back of the house extended a charming kitchen such as notable housewives like Deborah loved to beautify and decorate with substantial ornaments like strings of dried apples, and onions, and bunches of herbs, and patchwork cushions upon the high-backed settle and the big armchair and the low window-seats. No labor-saving device such as painted floors, or oil-cloths, or even hard-wood boards were to be seen in such kitchens as these, but clean, wide boards of soft pine, free from knot or twist, were scrubbed to a dazzling whiteness, and then covered with sand as white, carefully marked by a broom into various ornamental patterns such as herring-bone, waves, shells, or even "posy-beds," but this last elaboration only where there were no children.

In such a kitchen Simeon Samson now found his wife busily spinning the yarn for his winter stockings on a great wheel whose sharp whir mingled pleasantly with her contralto voice as she sang a ditty of her day. Her husband, with a hand upon the latch, paused to listen with a smile all over his merry face.

"O maiden, can you make me a cambrie shirt,
Parsley and sage grow ripe in time,

Without any seam or needlework ?
And you shall be a true love of mine.

"Can you wash it then in yonder well,
Parsley and sage grow ripe in time,
Where never sprung water nor rain ever fell ?
And you shall be a true love of mine.

"Can you dry it well on yonder thorn,
Parsley and sage grow ripe in time,
Which died before ever Adam was born ?
And you shall be a true love of mine."

"Now, sir, you've asked me questions three,
Parsley and sage grow ripe in time,
I hope you'll answer as many for me,
And you shall be a true love of mine.

"Can you find me an acre of land,
Parsley and sage grow ripe in time,
Between the salt water and the sea sand ?
And you shall be a true love of mine.

"Can you plough it with a ram's horn,
Parsley and sage grow ripe in time,
And sow it all over with one peppercorn ?
And you shall be a true love of mine.

"Can you reap it with a sickle of leather,
Parsley and sage grow ripe in time,
And bind it up with a peacock's feather ?
And you shall be a true love of mine.

"When you have done and finished your work,
Parsley and sage grow ripe in time,
Then come to me for your cambric shirt,
And you shall be a true love of mine."

"Well done, dame ! Where did you get that ballad ?"
demanded Samson, pulling open the door and disclosing

a pretty picture. The three western windows of the kitchen, open to the sweet June air and sunshine, looked upon a garden rich in all the hearty bloom of early summer and gay with bees and butterflies, although the larger space was devoted to such useful matters as beets, onions, carrots, and pot-herbs of various sorts, while across the windows were trained hop-vines, whose fruit would be brewed into beer, diet-drink, and other compounds. Meantime the leaves made merry dancing shadows on the sanded floor, and gave occupation to the tortoise-shell kitten who tried to capture them. The spinning wheel was drawn into the middle of the great room, and the spinner, pacing up and down as she drew her thread, fine and even and well twisted as any spun in Plymouth, displayed to advantage her nobly-moulded figure and grand freedom of motion, while the dark face turned over her shoulder toward the opening door was lighted into beauty by a smile showing wonderfully white and even teeth.

"Learned it, Sim? Why, I always knew it," replied she. "Are you looking for your supper at this hour, sir?"

"No. I have brought you a letter out of the first post-package ever come into Plymouth."

"Oh, yes; Mary Foster told me this morning over the garden fence that the post-rider was expected to-day. And there's a letter for me?"

"No, for me; but lest you be jealous you shall have the first reading of it."

"I jealous! There never was a woman since Eve with less disposition that way."

"Well, open the letter and tell me who it's from, or I'll take it back and look for myself."

"That you sha'n't!" exclaimed Deborah, evading the playful snatch of her husband's hand, and raising the scissors swinging at her side she carefully cut around the great splotch of red wafer fastening the letter, and seating herself in the splint-bottomed chair beside her work-basket slowly opened the sheet of coarse foolscap paper and turned at once to the signature, —

"Your loving cousin, Deborah Samson."

"And who is this loving cousin, if you please, Captain Samson? I for one never heard of her."

"Nor I — and yet, yes, I remember now that Dr. LeBaron told me a sad tale of my far-off cousin Jonathan's widow and children left destitute at his death, and there was in especial a little Deborah" —

"How old a little Deborah?"

"Some five or six years old at that time, you jealous-pate."

"Well, well, we'll read the letter."

"Yes, that seems a tolerable way of getting at its meaning."

And the captain, throwing his leg over the corner of the table, teased the kitten with the shadow of his foot.

"'My dear cousin,' and a fair enough hand she writes, to be sure. 'Haply you never have heard of me, but I have of you, and now I hear that the Congress has made you a captain of the navy and set you to build a ship wherein to fight for our liberties. I am a patriot too, though I be but a girl, and only the last month I stood on the high hill behind our house and heard the sound of the cannon on Bunker's Hill when our brave Warren and the rest drove the British red-coats out of their intrenchments. I could not tell how the day was going, but there on the hillside I fell on

my knees and swore to God that if He would give my people the victory I would serve Him all the rest of my life, and so I will. Cousin, I write to you to offer myself as a sailor on board your new ship, the Independent. I am a tall, strapping lass, five foot seven and a half inches high, and as strong as a man. I love the sea, for you know that my forbears were sailors all, and in his extremity my father was glad to bury himself beneath it. I will put on men's clothes and meet you at any port you can mention, and I will be a good, obedient, faithful sailor, never telling who I am or that I am kin to you, nor asking more than a nod or a word now and again just to let me know some one cares for me.' "

So far Deborah read, and letting the paper fall upon her lap raised both her hands in horror.

"Put on man's clothes and be a sailor in your ship, and you to give her a kind word now and again! Simeon Samson, do you mean to tell me that you will encourage such doings as those?"

"Don't you think it's a pretty good idea?" demanded the captain, teasingly. "A girl of spirit, that, and" —

"Take your letter and finish it yourself — it's not fit for a decent woman to read."

"Tut, tut, mistress! That's no way to talk of a poor little kinswoman who knows no better than to lay such schemes. It's you that should know better than to heed them; no, you sha'n't run away — sit you right here upon my knee and we'll read the rest of it together. Come, now, Deb, I mean it, and you'll have to give in, as well soon as late."

"Let me read, then, for you'll be slurring over the worst of it."

"Read if you like, but the worst on't so far is your own folly. Read away."

“ ‘I am but young yet, no more than sixteen, but strong and stout. I live with Deacon Jeremiah Thomas here in Middleborough and work too hard by spells, though they are kind enough to me. I feed the pigs and poultry, and milk two cows, and spin and weave and do the work of the house, and last winter I taught the village school so as to get time to study for myself, for they hate to see me with a book here in the house, and I have a longing desire to learn, and to know something more than pigs and poultry. The deacon gets a newspaper now and again from the minister, and when he does I read every word of it, and I listen with both my ears to all the men’s talk that I hear, so I do know a good deal, for all I ’m so ignorant.’ ”

“ What a fool’s speech that is, ‘I know a good deal, though I ’m so ignorant,’ ” interrupted Deborah, spitefully.

“ I understand her,” replied Simeon, briefly, and taking the letter he went on : —

“ ‘I got lots of time in the school for myself, for there is n’t much to teach. We have the New England Primer, and there are a few spelling-books, and the New Testament to read in ; and two or three of the boys learned to write, and had paper and pen and ink, so that’s how I learned myself and got the things ; and I taught the girls to knit and sew and do samplers ; and there was n’t a boy in the school I could n’t flog, and I did it too, so that made them very quiet while I was studying ; and the minister lent me books. I like to read about battles and sea-fights and heroes, and I think you must be a hero, cousin Simeon, and I want to go in your ship and fight the British and live and die for my country. Please write and answer this ; you need not

pay any postage, for Reuben Thomas is courting the postmaster's daughter in Abington, and he goes over every Sunday night to set up with her, and she'll send my letters for nothing ; so no more at present from

“ ‘ Your loving cousin,

“ ‘ DEBORAH SAMSON.’ ”

“ There, now ! what do you say to that, Captain Samson ? ” demanded Deborah, as her husband released her waist and folded up his letter with a provoking sort of smile upon his face.

“ I say that Deborah Samson is a simple sort of creature : one of her name talks like a fool, and t’other listens to her like a fool.”

And with this pithy if somewhat rough verdict the captain got up, filled and lighted his pipe, and went to smoke it at the front door, while Deborah very energetically began to prepare supper.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A PRIVATE LOG.

THE Independence was completed, was afloat, and in commission. Captain Samson, glorious in a new uniform and a maiden sword, tenderly kissed his wife good-by, and with the kiss committed to her guardianship those gentler and tenderer traits of his nature for which he expected to have small occasion in the life of a naval commander.

A boat manned by sailors trained in the British navy, but driven by cruelty and hardship from her service, soon set their new commander aboard the brigantine, and as he reached the quarter deck, and removing his cocked hat, saluted the Continental colors waving above his head, the dense crowd of Kingston and Plymouth men thronging Cole's Hill, the wharves, and the shipping in both harbors, sent up a mighty shout of cheer and promise, while from window and housetop fluttered the kerchiefs and scarves of the women, and from the flag-staff upon the captain's own house flew out the banner his wife Deborah's fingers had spun, and dyed, and woven, and sewed, and which that very morning she had laid in her husband's hands with brave words whose strength was in no wise lessened by the tear in her eye, or the tremor in her voice.

"It shall wave at the peak, Simeon, for your return, or it shall wave half-mast for your glorious death."

It was then that he kissed her.

But now, as he ordered his new ordnance to fire a triple salute, and his unworn flag to thrice dip in courteous response to that thunderous shout, it was not for Deborah and her fluttering kerchief, not even for her patriotic banner that he looked, nor of them he thought. It was to those hundreds of brother men, every one of them ready as he to die for their common country, it was to Kingston his cradle, and Plymouth the home of his manhood that his glistening eyes turned, and his cheek grew white as, clenching the hilt of his sword, he muttered low : —

“For God and my country — in life or death !”

Then as a small cold wind straight from Burying Hill filled the new sails of the warship, she made her stately way out of the harbor and past the Gurnet, where the breeze failed her, and she lay becalmed within hail of a small schooner, belonging, as the Plymouth men knew, to Edward Winslow, who had been in it to New York to arrange plans for his removal thither, should the rebel cause meet with the unaccountable success that seemed now possible.

“Our first prize, Captain,” remarked Lieutenant Dyer, confidentially, as the British ensign rose defiantly to the mast-head of the schooner, and Edward Winslow with his brother-in-law, Gideon White, stood on the deck.

“Hail her, Lieutenant,” was the brief response, and Dyer obeyed with alacrity.

“What schooner is that ?”

“Schooner Loyal, of His Majesty’s town of Plymouth and Colony of Massachusetts, and bound to that port. What brigantine is that ?”

“Independence, armed privateer of the Province of Massachusetts Bay.”

“Do not know any such power. Is it at war with Great Britain?”

“It wars only upon its open enemies, and hopes no Plymouth men are to be found among them,” replied Samson, and taking off his hat, he bowed courteously in token of farewell. Winslow silently returned the salute, but Gideon White, who could not yet seriously accept the idea of Whig authority or dignity, seized the trumpet from Winslow’s hand and roared: —

“If you see my son Gideon up yonder, give him my remembrance, and ask him to bring down a king’s sloop, to clear these waters of picaroons.”

“If I see him, I’ll give him a free passage home in a patriot brigantine, Mr. White,” retorted Samson, and so the vessels, drifting with the tide, got out of hail, probably to their mutual satisfaction.

About six weeks later the Independence, cruising off Liverpool, Nova Scotia, ran across a fisherman from whom the captain gained certain interesting particulars as to the occupation of the town, resulting in a very successful midnight surprise, by which an armed boat’s crew of the Independence, headed by the captain in person, captured or destroyed a quantity of military supplies waiting at Liverpool for transport to Halifax, and seized in his bed, or hardly out of it, a young gentleman, to whom the captain grimly remarked: —

“Gideon, you are my prisoner! I promised your father, not six weeks ago, that I would bring you home, but really I did n’t look for so quick a chance.”

“Your turn to-day, Samson, mine to-morrow,” replied the gallant young fellow, quietly. “I hope I may put on some clothes.”

"Put on as many as you will, and show these men your boxes and bags. 'T would be a pity to leave your London breeches behind you," replied the captain. And so it came to pass that when, after sending in a few prizes, the *Independence* ran into Plymouth to report herself and procure some fresh provision, Gideon junior was handed over to the Committee of Safety, who imprisoned him for a while; and then as all the women, both Whig and Tory, made a pother about the shame and sin of keeping the handsomest youth of the Colony in confinement, or "in a dungeon," as they called it, he was released on parole, and lived at his father's home on Main Street (now replaced by the Engine House) until his final departure for Nova Scotia, where his descendants may still be found, and still are contemptuous of Whig authority or dignity.

But the most memorable cruise of the *Independence*, and one of which we have the fullest detail, is that whose record is kept by Henry Goodwin, son of Doctor Lazarus LeBaron's daughter Hannah, who married Benjamin Goodwin, brother of her sister Lydia's husband, Nathaniel.

It lies before us, the little tattered, blurred, fragmentary book, actual part of the *Independence*, telling so much and withholding so much, its pages vitalized by the hand of the writer as it passed across their surfaces and left between the lines a record impossible to transcribe, and yet containing the true essence of the story. The words themselves are crude, artless, and unlearned, and yet so much more eloquent than one can write at this distance of time that we will have them just as they stand, and bridge for ourselves the gaps they leave.

“ October y^e 20th 1778

“ This Day being fine Weather, at 10 o'clock A. M. we took our Departure from Plimouth. At 3 P. M. lost Sight of the Gurnet. At 5 o'clock P. M. lost sight of Cape Cod and this hour we lose sight of Land.

“ Nothing worth Remark happening the Six Days following, & no Saile appearing.

“ The next Day being Sunday y^e 27th early in y^e Morning we Descry'd a Sail under our Lee and gave her Chase and come up with her very fast. At 1 P. M. we crouding sail and shaking the Reefs out of the topsails we Carry'd away our foretopmast and All went over the Side, the Chase discovering that Accident threw out a Red Ensign and firing a Gun to Leeward, put away before the Wind & showing herself to us very plain we discover'd her to be a Bark. All this time All Hands employ'd at clearing the Rigging & getting our spare Topmast on End. At Night we lost sight of her. This night some of our Men employed in getting the Topmast and Rigging in Order fell overboard but soon were reskwed and the next Day being Monday the 28th of October we got our new Topmast on End nothing Remarkable happening and no Sail appearing.”

A week of fishing and shooting wild fowl, killing a sheep, and coasting the Banks of Newfoundland ensues, and then, on “ Monday y^e 4th of November, we saw several sail & spoke with a Brigantine which belonged to *Aver de Grace*, she being French Property we parted with her. There being several Sail in Sight, we gave Chase to the Nighest & in a short time come Up with Her, She being a Brigantine from Placentia in Newfoundland bound to Waterford in Ireland with 90 Passengers aboard, her cargo consisting chiefly in Train Oil

and Blubber. She is reckoned to be worth Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars. The first Day She come out of Placentia she was Intercepted and taken by the Arm'd Schooner Ranger Commanded by John Churchill from Newbury, who put his Lieutenant as Prize Master and 8 others on Board, and intended to keep Company with her, but Parting in a Gale of Wind the Passengers Rose took her and alter'd her Course for Waterford, the Original Mate taking charge of her."

And just here one must lay down the little sea-worn, tattered book to wonder if Henry Goodwin felt all the force of his simple narrative. Ninety wild Irishmen held prisoner and carried whither they would not, by a prize crew of eight Newbury yeomen, and their insurrection in the midst of the storm, and the "Original Mate" changing place with the defeated prize master and laying her course joyfully for Waterford again! And then the Independence, flying that new and untried flag, coming to the rescue and reversing again the order of defeat and success!

Well, perhaps the surgeon's mate knew it all and did not say it; perhaps of all of it he was a part, and yet saw only the husk; at any rate, he makes no comment and calmly goes on:—

"We put several men on board the Prize & kept Company with Her the Wind blowing Very Hard this Night & next Day nothing Remarkable could be transacted; the 6th inst being Calm we brought all the former Captors on board, 10 of the Passengers and Mate which were the first that rose, and put a Prize Master and 18 men aboard the Prize. This Day we finish'd the Business, the Prize Master having Orders to keep by us till further Orders. The 7th being a very pleasant Day, toward

Night we discry'd a sail under our Lee and gave Chase hoping to speak with Her in the Morning but were Disappointed no Sail appearing in the Morning except our Prize within Hail.

“Nov. 9th We lost sight of our Prize she having rec'd Orders to proceed for the first Convenient Port in the State of the Massachusetts Bay.”

Let us here interpolate that the “Prize” duly arrived at Boston, and that the captain and crew of the Independence duly received their share of the prize-money.

Next comes a bit of sea fun.

“At 7 A. M. we discover'd a Sail and went after her, at 11 A. M. come up with her. She proved to be a French Schooner from St. Peters bound to St. Malos loaded with Fish. We hoysted out our Yawl, and Lieut. Dyer went aboard and sent the Capt. and Owner Aboard the Independence, the Frenchmen thinking Us to be one of His Majesty's Arm'd Vessels. After they had been on Board some Time we hoysted Continental Colours which Undeceived Them. They appeared to be very much Rejoyc'd. After much perswasion they Consented to take 3 of the Prisoners that come out of the Brig^{ne} Aboard.”

After this came many days of more or less adventure, for the Independence in her seven months' service captured and sent in five prizes, one of them the Roebuck, Captain White.

But the bravest ships, the bravest men, must die. Fortune of war, brave hearts of oak, and a noble end that comes in the midst of noble strife!

The twenty-fifth day of November, only a month from the day she lost sight of the Gurnet, the Independence, while chasing a British sloop which was to have

been her sixth prize, came upon "two Saile about 5 points on our Lee Bow. We then left the Sloop and Bore Away, crouding all the Sail we Possibly cou'd. We raised them fast, and soon Discover'd them Plain from the Deck, and found them to be a Ship and a Brigantine. Then says our Noble Captain, 'I believe the Ship to be a Transport & what the Brig^{ne} is I can't discover, but prepare yourselves for an Ingagement, and we'll see what they are made of.'

"We made ready & soon see they were also for Ingaging, haul'd up their Courses and Lay too for us to come up. We first come up with the Brig^{ne} within Pistol shot, we hoysted Continental Colours they Immediately hoysted St. George's Jack and give us a Gun, for which we gave her a broadside. After that it was broadside for broadside for two glasses" (hour-glasses) "upon which the Ship seeing we were like to be more than a match for the Brigantine come up upon our Quarter with 16 Six Pounders and a hundred and forty soldiers."

Then followed an incident which the discreet surgeon does not mention, fearing perhaps to bring his "Noble Captain" into trouble, but which the newspapers of the day related with stern approval.

When the heavily armed and manned transport Nancy came up to reënforce the Hope, commanded by that gallant George Dawson whose many successes had made him a little too skeptical of Yankee skill and valor, some of the men of the Independence, overborne by that terrific two hours' combat, shrunk from encountering a fresh foe and murmured at their guns.

Samson, who, covered with smoke of gunpowder and blood of half-staunched wounds, was everywhere, heart-

ening, helping, cheering on his men, heard and saw the dismay, and with a bound stood beside the mutineers.

“What’s that, you coward! Strike the flag! Hark y’, my fine fellow, death from the enemy is possible, but death from my own hand is certain, unless you turn to with a will. Train that gun for’ad! You heard the order!”

Beneath the captain’s eye and the muzzle of the captain’s pistol the mutineers succumbed and began to obey the order, when the *Nancy*, bringing up on the starboard quarter, poured in a broadside, whose shot actually crossed the course of those still spasmodically fired by the *Hope*.

“It’s all over now — run for your lives!” shouted a coward holding commission as third lieutenant of the *Independence*, and bounded toward the companion way, where he was met by his captain, who, having fired his pistol at an Englishman, tore his sword from its scabbard and received the flying traitor upon its point. With a shriek the poor wretch threw up his arms and fell dead, and a sailor who followed him met the same fate.

“Seize him! Give him up and haul down the flag!” yelled another mutineer, and again the sword flashed and fell, and the livid face and blazing eyes of the commander turned upon the wavering knot of those who followed.

“As sure as God’s in heaven I’ll lay you all beside ’em unless you turn to,” shouted he, flourishing that dripping sword above his head; and, more afraid of him than of the British, the men raised a fickle shout of loyalty and turned to their work. Dawson, mounted on the taffrail of the *Hope*, saw it all, and the pistol covering Samson’s head dropped at his enemy’s side.

“What a hero lost to the British navy!” exclaimed he to his first lieutenant.

“You might bring him over in pieces, but never alive,” replied that officer.

And so for another hour the battle raged, the *Hope* on the one side and the *Nancy* on the other pouring in broadside after broadside, until as the latter came creeping up to board, Samson, looking around upon his haggard and exhausted men, and hearing the gunners report that certain guns were too hot to fire and the ammunition of others was running low, set his teeth in the mightiest struggle of all that day, and gave the order to make sail and bear away.

“Up with your helm, steersman,” repeated he, impatient that the order seemed of no avail, and turning to the wheel he found the man, a blithe young Plymouth fellow, hanging across it dead. Another took his place, and the spokes turned, but with no result; the masts, sails, and rigging were so riddled with shot that it was impossible to make sail, and like a wounded bird the *Independence* could only feebly flutter her wings, but fly no more.

“We can’t get way upon the brigantine, Captain, without new rigging,” reported the sailing master, quietly, and the first lieutenant, clinging to the breech of a gun because he could not stand on a broken leg, gasped:—

“For God’s sake, Captain, don’t throw away these men’s lives! The boarders will be upon us in a moment, and there’s nobody left to repel them.”

And from the captain’s breast burst such a groan that they who heard it told it with awe to their children and their children’s children.

“Must we strike our flag, Dyer?”

"For the sake of these men, Captain."

"Why did n't they shoot me first!"

"Quick, Captain!" And as the *Nancy* ranged up on the weather quarter, with the evident intention of locking her yard-arms with those of the *Independence*, and so pouring in her troops, the lieutenant fell swooning from the gun, and Samson, white as death, could only signal with his bloody sword to the men at the signal halliards.

Down came the Continental colors, and the *Nancy*, with three men at the wheel, glided harmlessly past the side of the *Independence*, while a shout of triumph went up from the decks of the ship, but was immediately repressed by orders from Dawson himself.

A few moments later the two heroes stood face to face and curiously eyed each other.

"Captain Samson, I am proud to be your host," said the English officer, extending his hand. "I never saw a ship better worked, or an engagement more bravely fought."

"And yet, sir, my sword is yours," replied Samson, bitterly, as he unbuckled and presented it.

"No, Captain, no," returned Dawson; "a man who can use a sword as you have should never be without one."

"Thank you, Captain Dawson. If I must be conquered I had rather yield to you than any man alive."

Would you like to see that sword? It lies in Pilgrim Hall in old Plymouth, with its ancestor, the sword of Myles Standish.

So ended what has been called "an engagement of as severe and bloody a character as is recorded in the annals of naval warfare. Had Captain Samson been sustained by all his men, he would undoubtedly have been

the conqueror rather than the vanquished, and his skill and intrepidity were applauded even by his enemies."

Let us hope that applause and the company of his sword were a solace to the vanquished hero during his seven months' imprisonment at Fort Cumberland, Halifax, Nova Scotia. That he diverted himself during a part of the time is proven by an elaborately carved clock-case which he wrought and brought home as a present to his wife. Probably there was no Thérèse at Fort Cumberland, or perhaps sixteen years of active service had told upon the captain's face; at any rate, he remained a prisoner until the beginning of July, 1777, when he was exchanged, and returned home to take command of the States' armed brig, Hazard. But let us know a little more of the fate of the Independence and her crew.

"We soon found that the Nancy was bound to Fort Cumberland, Nova Scotia, where we were all carried Except those Kill'd in the Ingagement two of which was Seth Doten and Benjⁿ Sparrow. This woful Night our people were All Dispers'd, some on board the ship, and some on board the Brigantine but all were carried from the Independence except Dr. Cutting myself, the wounded and a few men to attend us. Two of our wounded died of their wounds at Fort Cumberland at which place we were all order'd on board the Frigate Lizard to go to Annapolis and from there to Hallifax but when she saw the Distres't Condition two of our wounded were in, (the rest by this time were in a very good way) she Refus'd taking them on Board, so they stay'd behind."

Here a few pages of the time-worn manuscript are lost, but it is evident that, leaving Samson and the dying

men at Fort Cumberland, the surgeon's assistant, some of the prisoners, and a prize crew, with the Independence, were carried to Annapolis, and thence set sail for Halifax in their own vessel, but under escort of a British brigantine.

Dr. Goodwin goes on : —

“As we came out of Annapolis the Wind began to Increase and about sunset we were obliged to shorten sail, and about sunset the wind at N. increased to such a digree that the Brigan^{ne} in Company with us hove to, and disired us to Do the Same. But our Prize Master not being Acquainted with our Brigantine feared she would founde and for that Reason kept her Before the Wind. It Blew Exceeding hard. The Next Morning we were all again surpriz'd at the Cry of Fire we found our Hold fill'd with Smoke and upon Examination found a Hole in our Galley Hearth where the Fyre had got through into some wood. The decks were then filled with Ice under which we were all of a Blaze ! Good God what a Situation we were in ! Yesterday morning we Expected every moment to Perish in the Water this morning we Expected to Perish in the Fire. The wind continuing the same way for two days with Equal Velocity our Prize Master on the 3^d day which was more Moderate Concluded to make Sail & put away for the West Indies ; all were agreed to it except ten prisoners who were taken in a small schooner belonging to Plymouth, Commanded by Captain Hatch. They were all Plymouth men, and fearing they should be in the Enemy's Hands longer than if they went to Hallifax, (now we took them at Annapolis to carry there, for a Cartel was then waiting at Hallifax for them and us) they Petittion'd to make trial to Beat on again

but they were not heard. Accordingly without any farther Ceremony we made the Best of our way toward Antigua; we being very short of water were put upon Allowance of 3 Pints per Day upon which we Made Out very well. Nothing remarkable Happen'd until we came up with Bermoodas when we saw a Sloop to the windward about 8 o'clock A. M. the Prisoners were then wrapt in Silent Expectation of her being an American Privateer. Our Prize Master bore away, made all the Sail he possibly could but she came up with us very fast and almost within cannon-shot but as we Suppoz'd she then saw we were built war like & fear'd to Ingage so our Expectations of being re-taken were Sadly Cut off. After this we saw but 2 or 3 Sail until the 23 of January. We were then in the Lat. of about 22 or 3 and about 10 o'clock A. M. we saw a large Ship to the Windward and a Schooner to the Leeward, We soon saw the Ship bareing down upon us, and the Schooner standing the same way we were by the Wind we were all Inclined to think that the Ship was an English Man of War and the Schooner her Tender. They Both seem'd Eager to speak with Us but our Prize Master declin'd having anything to say to Either of them if he Could Avoid it. However as the Fates ordered it the wind almost Died away about 4 or 5 o'clock P. M. By this Time the Ship had got within about 3 Leagues we fearing to run from her lest the Schooner should Catch us stood upon our Course but we all kept our Eyes steadily Fix'd on the ship watching her Motions and soon saw a very fine-looking Barge come from her toward us. We then hove too and waited for her to come up. She came within Hale of us and we discover'd the Gold Laced Hats of the Officers their

Swords &c and the Peoples Dutch caps. We haled them & they immediately answering ask'd who we were. Our Master Told them & ask'd what ship's Boat that was; they say'd it was the Simater's, Man-of-War from Antigua and ordered to make Toward the ship as fast as Possible. We accordingly did for the wind sprang in our favour so that we came along-side of her just after Dark. She then discover'd herself to us & proved to Be the Boston, privateer Mounting 25 carriage guns, besides Swivels, Cohorns, etc. They gave orders to strike our (British) colours and heave to which we accordingly did. They then Sent for our Master and his own people to come on board the Ship and sent us another Master and ships Company on board that night. The next day Capt. Brown the Commander of the Ship seeing we Sail'd exceeding fast and Look'd very warlike all excepting the want of guns (now our guns were all Left at Fort Cumberland so that we were in a Defenceless Situation) the Captain Concluded to put some Guns on board and Everything Necessary to fit us for a Privateer and keep us for his Tender. He accordingly did, & appointed Mr. Jeremy Hagerty our Commander. I was then desir'd to Act as Surgeon of her a Circumstance which was of Advantage to our two wounded Men which were in a fine way & almost well but that my Medicines were Exhausted and a fresh supply was Necessary which I now had from the Ship.

“ We gave Chase after this to several Sail but they all proved French, Spanish, or American friends until About the 6th of August we came acrost a Brigantine from London. We readily agreed to send her in and Mr. Hagerty our Master was Ordered to take Charge of her and Mr. Stoughton Lieutenant of the Ship took the command of the Independence.”

And so we leave the regained Independence with its merry surgeon, only wishing he had continued his journal until his return home, which we know took place, for three years later he was married.¹

¹ See note in Appendix.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PARSON HOVEY. — T. FOR 'T IS, AND T. FOR 'T IS N'T.

BUT let us go back in our story a little, to a sweet June morning before the Independence had taken such positive shape.

The roses were in bloom in the doctor's garden stretching all along LeBaron's Alley to Middle Street, as folk now carefully called it, and in their midst stood two young women, as fair and sweet as they, although the one was in gracious fullness and richness of matronhood, and the other the half-developed blossom, coyly hiding its glowing heart and threatening to refold the calyx leaves around its promise.

"Come now, Margaret, tell me in so many words, and waste no more of either your or my time. Have you quarreled with Philip de Montarnaud, or is it only cat-and-mouse play?"

"Oh, pray don't waste your time, Mrs. Priscilla, over such idle concerns as mine; see, here you are!" And cleverly capturing a lady-bug creeping over a rose-leaf, Margot held him upon the tip of a tapering forefinger and mockingly sang: —

"Lady-bug, lady-bug, fly away home,
Your house is on fire and your children will burn!"

And giving her finger a flick, the insect spread her wings and flew away, as it chanced in a northerly direction.

“See, Pris, she’s showing you the way!”

“Peggy, you’re enough to provoke a saint, but I am your older sister” —

“Oh, so much older! Three whole years, is n’t it?”

“Do be good, little sister, and let me help you!”

“Oh, Pris, I’m naughty, and I love to be naughty, and nobody can help me, and — and — I wish — I wish” —

But the wish was lost in the great bunch of white roses the girl suddenly crushed up against her face.

“Child! But did you let him go away in anger?”

“Yes; why need he tell me about that Mademoiselle de Rochambeau, and hope she could come over here with her brother the count? And oh, she was so elegant, and so accomplished, and so *gentile*, and so mistress of herself, and had so fine a manner, and never was rude, and — and — I know not what all; but I do know that I told Monsieur Philip to get back to her and her brother, or to France, or to Havre de Grace, or anywhere else he liked, as fast as he could, and never come troubling me again, for there was a better man than he” —

“A better man! Why, whom did you mean, Margot?”

“Why — Tom Crandon, or Tom Davis, or Tom Watson, and when I’ve done with the Toms I’ll take the Dicks, and then the Harrys; there’s enough to be had of all three.”

“Now, see here, Peggy,” —

“You know that I hate to be called Peggy.”

“Well Margaret, then,” —

“No, Margot. Don’t you love your little Margot, Prissy dear?”

“Oh, Margot,” —

"Mas'r send his comperments, and like to speak to Mis' Pris w'en she done conversas'ing wid Miss Marg'et."

"Oh!" And Priscilla, a little startled, turned and confronted Quasho, very bent, very white, very lame, in these days, and with a certain air of feeble expectancy always hanging about him, — the air that characterizes some purblind, stiff-limbed old dog, whose master has gone into a house and left him waiting on the doorstep. Sight and scent and hearing have all grown dim, but there is yet another sense that will tell him when his master comes, and he will follow him, yes, follow to the end.

"Good - morning, Quash," said Priscilla, gently. "How is the rheumatism? Did the opodeldoc do you good?"

"T'ank you kin'ly, Mis' Prissie, it done me heap o' good, t'ank you."

"Who rubbed it on for you?"

"Well, it ain't been rubbed on yit, Mis' Pris, 'cause Phyllis pooty mis'able in her feelin's dese days, an' I don' keer 'bout strippin' off 'fore dese new niggers; but it done me heaps o' good to t'ink Mis' Pris done put it up fer pore old unc' Quash, an' de piece o' frannel an' all so pooty and nice. I'll go tell mas'r Mis' Pris a-comin'."

And retreating as he spoke, with many bows and scrapes, the old fellow was out of hearing before Priscilla could reply.

"And I'll go and corroborate the news," cried Margot, gayly, and fled away in another direction. A little later Priscilla found her arranging roses in a great Indian bowl, in the parlor, looking toward the sea, the

parlor where Teresa, years before, had like a royal donor given a man to her suppliant rival.

"Margot, father says he should like a little ride, and wants you to go with him and drive."

"Does he? I am so glad he feels stronger."

"So am I; he wants to go over to Ponds, to see Dr. Ivory Hovey."

"Is he ready?"

"Yes; there's the chaise at the door."

"I'll run and get my hat."

"But one word more, Maggie," —

"No, no, we mustn't keep father waiting."

And Priscilla could not get another word with her sister, until the latter, radiant and provoking, ran down the stairs and lightly sprang into the chaise, where her father, the wan shadow of his former self, awaited her.

"Shall I drive, father?" asked she, taking the reins from the shaking hand with which Quasho ceremoniously handed them to his master.

"Why, yes, if you want to, Margot," replied the invalid. It was a little ceremony performed every time Dr. Lazarus had been out for many a day.

"'Bye, Pris. Give my love to Abra'm."

"Good-morning, father; good-morning, Peggy."

And as Mrs. Hammatt turned down the Alley toward her home, Margot shook the reins and blithely drove along Leyden Street and down the steep hill of Market Street and along the Sandwich road, saying: —

"Going to Parson Hovey's, are n't we?"

"Yes, daughter. His niece Abiah, S'uth'ard Howland's wife, told me that the parson is but poorly and fancied to see me."

"He always does you good, father, whether you can help him or not."

"Yes, the man has a marvelous dry humor that suits my fancy. Ha! Dr. Nathaniel Lothrop, was it not?"

"Yes, father."

"I wish we had stopped and asked him how his wife finds herself to-day."

"I heard that Madam Hobart, her mother, was here to visit her," said Margot, knowing that her father cared for little bits of town news like this.

"Ah — Madam Hobart," replied he; "a fine woman, a prodigious fine woman; she was Madam Lothrop, you know, and before that she was Mrs. Watson."

"And before that?"

"Oh, she was born Priscilla Thomas, of Marshfield, and there's a story to it. While she was a girl there at home, and Caleb Thomas was not too well off in this world's gear, a young Divinity student, Noah Hobart by name, came a-wooing, and got the maiden's promise easily enough; but the father demurred, for he knew that parsons are apt to be more blessed in progeny than pence, and Noah was not even a parson yet. While the question was hanging, John Watson, grandfather of the John who married Lucia Marston t'other day, and who was a rich young widower, with house next to your sister Lyddy's there, came a-courting also, and the father at once gave the vote for him. You see it would be so convenient to have a place in Plymouth to stop over night when he came to Sessions Court, and he was a very litigious man."

"Father!"

"Well, Caleb put the matter before Priscilla fairly enough, and she told Noah all about it, expecting to be

much praised for her constancy; but Noah was cool and sensible even in those days, and wise beyond his years. He considered the matter for a while, and then told her that her father was right; marriage with him meant long waiting, even for the daily bread absolutely necessary, and that it was likely enough the butter for it would never come. John Watson was a good man, and a rich man, and her life with him would be safe and prosperous, and she could give a helping hand to the sisters coming up behind, so he released her from her promise, and forestalling a little his ministerial privileges gave her his blessing and bade her good-by."

"The horrid, hateful jilt of a man!" exclaimed Margot, bringing the whip down so sharply on the old horse's back as to make him caper.

"So Priscilla thought," replied the doctor, dryly. "And instead of meekly accepting the blessing and the advice, she sent her reasonable lover away with a flea in his ear, and then cried herself sick. Silly girl, was n't she, Margot, to quarrel with her best friend?"

"Perhaps she expected to make it up," suggested Margot with a little smile.

"Perhaps she did; but Noah had spirit as well as judgment, and the next news was that he had engaged himself to Ellen Sloss, a very pretty girl, with a very pretty purse. Then Priscilla accepted John Watson in a hurry and was married before Hobart graduated, which no doubt was a comfort to her. Two or three years later, just after Hobart's marriage, Watson died, leaving Priscilla a handsome and wealthy widow, but too late for Noah, you see."

"I hope Ellen Sloss did n't know about it, or she might have felt *de trop*," remarked Margot, saucily.

"She probably did not. So prudent a man would have kept a discreet silence upon such a subject. Well, Isaac Lothrop, himself a widower, devoted himself to comforting the widow, and was so successful that she presently married him, and made him an admirable wife. Then Mrs. Hobart died and Isaac Lothrop died, and at last those two stood face to face with only three graves and some thirty years between them. A trifle, you see, a mere bagatelle, even if you add the circumstance that her son Nathaniel Lothrop and his daughter Ellen Hobart were already betrothed" —

"Father! You make my head reel."

"A four-handed reel, my dear, since they all were married, and life seems to go merry as a marriage bell with all of them, except that poor Mrs. Ellen Lothrop has inherited her father's weak lungs, and won't live very long. I don't know whether Nat has any little plans for the future or not; but here we are at Ponds. You have been so agreeable, my dear, that the way has seemed very short."

Margot, who was accustomed to her father's humor, made no reply, but skillfully drew rein before a charming old house, gambrel-roofed and painted red. In front was a great square porch with benches at the sides, a white rose bush closing in one side of it and a red one the other, both on this June day full of bloom and bees and humming-birds. A well with a long sweep lay at one side the house, an apple orchard behind, two great elms with seats around them in front. Turf close as velvet, and green as grass, lay like a royal carpet from the roadside to the low sunken natural rock forming the doorstone, smoothed and polished through fifty years by the feet of the poor, the sorrowful, the perplexed, the

weary, the discouraged, all who needed a friend, a father, and a pastor; for Parson Hovey was all of this to his people, and not one of them but brought to him his troubles, if he brought little else. Sometimes they brought their joys and successes also, but at Manomet Ponds, as with the rest of the world, these have never made a large percentage of the total, and like the other good things of life, people are apt to keep them for themselves.

“Ah, good-morning, good-morning, Doctor! And good-morning to you, my dear. Anna is at home with her baby and will be amazing proud to show him to you. Come in, Doctor, come in, and have a glass of home-made wine or a gentle sip of spirits after your ride.”

And with careful, cordial grasp that looked like greeting and really was assistance, the hale old man led the older man from his carriage to the door and seated him in the armchair whence he had just risen, while a comely young matron bustled out to meet the guests, and her mother smiled in the open doorway.

“Dominicus will see that your horse is put up, and you must stay for dinner,” said the parson, and wife and daughter echoed the invitation so cordially that the doctor, a little shaken by his drive, and Margot, who enjoyed the esthetic “values” of Ponds parsonage and its inmates, gladly accepted. So soon as this was settled the women disappeared carrying Margot with them, and the two old men, pipe in hand, and a cool tankard with glasses upon the bench beside them, settled for a talk.

“And what was this I heard of your stealing my trade and setting a man’s jaw, the other day?” asked the doctor, whereat the parson laughed, and taking a

long pull at his pipe, sent a spire of smoke high into the air.

“Why, you know I studied medicine before I did divinity, and sometimes think I know as little of the one as t’other,” said he, cheerily. “Well, it chanced this way. I had been down town contending with Brother Robbins over this Halfway Covenant business. I think he is doing himself and his people a mischief because he will have all men follow the rule of John Calvin as straightly as he does himself. But Calvin was no more than a man, and so limited by his own day and generation; and God who is Infinite has made man with a capacity of growth and development which makes the new generation chafe against the limits of the old, and so cast away the swaddling bands — well, well, I won’t give you my sermon dished up anew, but after this talk with Robbins, I preached it all the next Sunday, and perhaps being full of the matter waxed lengthy and abstruse; at any rate, I sent some of them off to sleep, and the warden had occasion not only to tap the men’s numskulls with the deer’s foot, but to tickle the women’s noses with the fox’s brush, more than once. Still, as I found it a help to my own understanding to put my convictions into words, I continued until the seventh head of my discourse and announced it, whereat Penuel Virgin, straight in front of the pulpit, gaped so prodigiously as to dislocate his nether jaw, which, when the gape was done, refused to return to its ordinary position. The man’s aspect was peculiar, and although distressing, was also in some sort so diverting that many of our younger members began to giggle, while others, chiefly among the women, loudly expressed sympathy, and ran to proffer the assistance they knew not

how to give. All this of course made an unseemly interruption to divine service and must be stopped, not to mention that Christian charity which prompts us to emulate the Good Samaritan in works of corporal mercy, so that merely pausing to round the period which I was approaching, I came down from the pulpit, brushed aside the women, and planting my thumb upon the end of the refractory jaw-bone while my fingers gripped the man's chin, I snapped the bone into place, and pushing up the chin closed his mouth and held it shut, the while I remarked : —

“Such is the penalty appointed for them who receive sound doctrine with gapes of slothful indifference.”

“Then as Penuel, daring not to open his mouth for reply, got out his kerchief and bound up his jaw like a dead man, I returned to the pulpit and gave them the remaining three heads of the discourse, through which no man gaped and no woman dozed.”

“Right glad am I, parson, that I came to Ponds this day. I have not had a generous laugh since I saw you last,” remarked the doctor, filling his glass and wiping his merry eyes.

“’Tis better than calomel for the liver,” replied the parson, with a twinkling smile, “and when I feel the megrims hovering about my head, I shut up Calvin or Edwards or Knox and go out to see my parishioners. Did I ever tell you of Sally Salisbury’s pies?”

“No.”

“Well, it was in the winter, and a cold day; so after Sally had allowed my plea to sit beside the kitchen fire, rather than in the chilly ceremony of the fore-room with its sputtering blaze, she proposed a mug of mulled cider and a cut of mince-pie, to the which I graciously con-

sented, and watched with quiet satisfaction as the cider was set to warm in a copper saucepan bright as gold, and the tin baker pushed up to receive the pie ; but presently Sally, who had been to the pantry, returned with a look of perplexity and a pie in either hand.

“ ‘Parson,’ says she, ‘you know most everything, and may be you can help me out in this. ’T was only yesterday I baked both mince and apple pies, and keyed all the edges so tight to keep in the juice that there’s no peeping at their in’ards ; then by way of head-mark I cut in the middle of every mince-pie, “t. m.,” which stands for “’tis mince,” and on every apple-pie I set “t. m.” to signify “’tis n’t mince,” and now I can’t tell t’other from which, and I’m sure I don’t see why.’ ”

“And you — what did you do ?” demanded LeBaron, wiping his eyes.

“Oh, I bade her bring the two pies to me for a sort of judgment of Solomon, and with my pocket-knife I ‘tapped’ first one and then the other, as one does a melon, and so discovered their contents. Sally has been very punctual at church ever since, having gained a new respect for her pastor’s talents.”

“Well, well, I have n’t anything as good as that to tell you,” said the doctor, “but I brought just a crumb to add to your feast. The other day Parson Robbins was walking with Colonel Watson, and met our old friend Sam, just up from Saquish, with a bunch of peeps for sale. The colonel, who likes a toothsome dish as well as any man, stopped to consider the peeps, and asked how many of them there were.

“ ‘Ninety-and-nine, Colonel,’ replied Sam with great solemnity ; ‘not one more, and not one less.’ ”

“ ‘Pho, Sam, why don’t you call it a hundred, and be done with it?’ asks the colonel, laughing, and Sam, rolling up his eyes at the parson, replies : —

“ ‘Think I ’m such a fool as to resk my soul for one d—d little peep?’ ”

“Ho, ho!” chuckled Parson Hovey. “That matches Sam’s other peep story that Winslow used to tell. A lot of them were down at Saquish and went out fishing with Sam. Something was said about peeps, and White sung out : —

“ ‘Sam, what is that story about your eating stewed peeps on a wager? How many did you account for, finally?’ ”

“ ‘No use in telling you, Colonel,’ says Sam, ‘you ’d only be passing your jokes on me; you would n’t believe me, not more than half, anyway, you know you would n’t.’ ”

“ ‘Think not, Sam? Well, try me on half, and see if I can swallow that, and then we will talk about the other half.’ ”

“ ‘Half — half?’ says Sam, pushing up his old sou’wester and scratching his head. ‘Well, half would be — le’s see — half would be — seventy-two, I guess.’ ”

“Ha, ha! Seventy-two — a hundred and forty-four peeps at a meal! Bravo, old Sam!” cried the doctor, smiting his knee, and the laughter of the two old men rang out cheerily on the pure air, and a blackbird in the great elm set up his crest and whistled in harmony.

“I don’t believe Mr. Hovey has told you his last joke, Doctor,” remarked the voice of the parson’s wife from the doorway. “You know he is a man who can never say no to the man who asks for his cloak, though his coat may have gone just before, so I have to look out for him a

little, or there would be no coat for him to wear into the pulpit of a Sunday" —

"Except his robe of righteousness, madam," interposed the doctor.

"White robes in the pulpit savor of Papistry," replied the dame, slyly, and went on: "So the other day, looking from my chamber window, I spied the parson out in the road, talking with a man I know, and know little good of except that he's a very 'professing' Christian and always going to do better. Well, I watched, and pretty soon I saw my husband take a silver dollar out of his pocket, where I knew 't was lone-some, and pass it over to the man, who ducked his head and scraped his foot, and scrambled off to drink it up."

"Olivia, my dear! Remember" —

"Just one minute, husband, and I'm done. He came in, Doctor, looking as pleased as though he'd got a dollar instead of spending one, and I said, 'Why did you give that man a dollar, husband?' and he replied, 'Because I owed it to him.' 'Owed it!' says I, for he never owes any man a farthing. 'Yes,' says he, 'I owe every poor devil something, for I've got more than my share of blessings.' And dinner's ready, Doctor."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A MYSTERY.

"OH, Pris, it is so good of you to do this for me!"

"I don't feel that it is good, Nan, I am afraid it's only weak. I don't believe it can do you any *good* to see this old witch, and I believe it's for more than her herbs that you visit her."

"Dear Pris, it is so kind of you to go and carry me!"

"But you won't say that you go only for medicine?"

"Priscilla, I have not very long to live, nor much joy while I live; do not grudge me any indulgence that makes life more tolerable. You have a husband, and children, and a home, and you need not to seek comfort in strange places; but all is different with me!"

"Hannah, you break my heart when you speak in that voice, and I could not deny you the very pieces of it, if they would pleasure you."

"I know it, Pris, and I love you for it."

"And after all, more than you have gone to mother Crewe to get their fortunes told, and will again, and nobody has died of it, so far as I've been told; so get up, Wally, get up."

And Priscilla Hammatt, with rather a doleful look at the lowering sky and gloomy pine woods closing around the road, laid the whip upon Wally, the horse Captain Hammatt had chosen to call Walrus from some likeness in his motion to the floundering of a sea-horse,

and turned him off the Carver Road into a woodpath leading to the cabin where mother Crewe still lived and waited, although her age had become as mythical as her means of subsistence.

"I hate to leave you here, Hannah," said she again, as Wally, with a last ponderous exertion, dragged the chaise out of the deep ruts and turned aside to the cabin door. "Mind you, it will be a good two hours or more before I can reach Lucas's, do my errand about the wood, and get back here."

"Never mind, Pris, we shall be at home before six o'clock, even so."

"Yes; but if she scare you, Nan, and there's no getting away?"

"She won't, she won't," replied Hannah, rather peevishly. "There, Pris, let me have my own way and kiss me good-by, though I'm so froward and vex you so sorely."

"You don't vex me, Nan, but — well, see if the old thing's at home before I go."

"Oh, she expects me — that is — I'll see, yes."

And as Hannah, a sudden color in her pale face, slipped from the carriage and knocked upon the crazy door, Priscilla felt the vague terror at her heart sharpen and intensify.

"She expected her!" said she softly; "and Hannah never told me!"

The door opened a crack, and Hannah, peering in, turned back to her friend with a gesture both of assent and of tender deprecation.

"She's at home, Priscilla, — oh, Pris, don't look like that!"

"You might have told me it was an appointment,

Hannah, but there — come kiss me good-by, child, and don't get scared. I'll be back as soon as I can."

"Good-by, Pris!" And standing on the step of the chaise, Hannah lifted her pale dark face to Priscilla's rosy one, and the friends kissed lovingly.

Then Priscilla drove thoughtfully away, and Hannah, pushing open the door, entered a gloomy room, comprising the whole area of the house, and yet too small for the multifarious contents. The only window was closely curtained, and when the door was shut no light remained except a dull glow from the turf upon the hearth. Close beside its glimmering spark some wild creature, tamed by the witch's arts, crouched, growling sullenly at the stranger's step.

"Be quiet, Milcom, or I'll put thy paw in the fire again," cried mother Crewe, fiercely, and the creature cowered and was still.

"It is well you came to-day, girl, for there are mighty ones in the air, and there is much to see. You brought the silver and the gold?"

"Here they are, and the gold was hard to come by."

"Yes, — and knowledge such as mine is hard to come by. And the meat and the bread and the strong waters?"

"They are in this basket."

"And the lock of your own hair, cut at the full of the moon?"

"Here it is."

"And you have said no prayers for the last four-and-twenty hours?"

"God forgive me — no."

"Hush, fool! Don't anger those you have summoned, and who can tell you what you want to know. Sit you

down here, fix your eyes upon that corner, and your thoughts on him you 're fain to see. Speak not a word, nor stir, whatever you may look upon, or whatever I may say. Be eyes and ears, and nothing more."

As she spoke, the hag placed a low seat in the centre of the room, spreading over it a cloth curiously embroidered around the edges with cabalistic signs. Upon this she placed Hannah, taking care that no part of her body or her clothes projected beyond the cloth. This done she covered the embers of the fire so that for a moment total darkness and silence filled the place. Then in the remotest corner of the room a thin blue flame flickered up, and was reflected in Milcom's phosphorescent eyes; the smell and sound of burning hair succeeded, and with it a wild chant, now rising to shrillness, now sinking to a melancholy wail, to groans, and sibilant whispers, and muttered words, and the weary breathings of exhaustion.

Hannah, silent, motionless, terrified but resolute, a cold moisture upon her brow, and her clenched hands cold as ice, never moved her eyes from the corner where she had been bidden to look, and noted the strange waves and flashes of color that swept from time to time across the black background of the scene. A creeping chill filled the air; a distant sound, as of surf breaking upon a beach half heard through restless sleep, forced itself upon her consciousness; an awful terror seemed to freeze the blood at her heart; a wild longing to fly to the rescue of something dearer than her own life combated with a numbing sense of disability. Then in the sweeping masses of vapor, shadowy forms began to shape themselves, — the ice-laden rigging of a vessel, driving sheets of sleet, men staggering before

them, fighting against them, beaten down and trampled to death by the demon of the storm. A sense of helpless flight before a deadly enemy sure to conquer in the end, of misery and mortal weariness, of struggle without hope, and the desperate defiance that ends in despair, — all passed over her, all seemed to drag her into union with those shadowy figures, momentarily growing more and more distinct before some interior perception that seemed to use her bodily eyes merely as windows, through which it gazed upon what those human eyes could not have seen.

One figure grew gradually more distinct than all the rest : a man, muffled as all were to the eyes, staggered up and down the deck, beating his breast, stamping his feet, fighting against the deadly chill as against a human foe, stooping now and again to raise a fallen comrade, to grasp the arm of one dropping into the sleep of death and force him to stagger beside him up and down the deck, to speak a word of cheer, and then himself to turn and gaze at some far-off point, as if to gather strength and hope from thence. A voice — was it mother Crewe's, or was it Milcom's, or yet some other force? The girl knew not, but it was a voice, and said, or rather chanted in a strange and awful monotone : —

“Christmas Day! Christmas Day! A Christmas stolen from the Nazarene! Christmas that scoffs at Him and his honor! A day of days for the Prince of the Power of the Air. A day to call out the storm fiends and the death of ice and sleet, and to snatch the breath out of lips that forswear the Great Birthday of the world. Let loose the bands of the North! Come, O cold that kills, and fury of storm and smothering snow! Come, deadly blast full of the ice-arrows of death! Come, frozen

waves of ocean breaking in destruction ! Come, heaving shoulders of mighty ones thrusting the ship upon the rocks and sands that wait to tear her asunder ! Hell is let loose and Hades laughs, for they go down — go down quick into the yawning gulf. Yet some — yes, some must be saved — a Power stands behind the Power of the Air, and some, some are set apart for life and not for death — some for life in this world — some who die to-day pass like the Three Children through the furnace to safety and joy — yes — he must loose his hold even though he snatch their mortal breath — yet some are his, all his — the man who, yet unborn, was cursed for his father's and his mother's sin — joy, joy, for he shall die — see — see — see how he is beaten down by that fury of ice and wind, see him slip and fall, and rise again and fall — and now he would rise, but another falls above him and pins him down — he dies and the curse is fulfilled — ah, the curse rebounds and returns whence it came out — the curser is the accursed forevermore, and no hope, no release, no pardon ” —

Whether the words were spoken by a voice, or whether they were spoken in her own brain, or if they fashioned themselves out of the scene that passed before that strange inner sight of hers, the girl could never tell even to herself ; nor could she distinguish what she heard from what she felt and saw ; nor could she tell if Ansel Ring, sinking, struggling, fighting for life, and turning in his last consciousness toward the spot where she dwelt, saw her and was with her, and with his frozen lips and ice-bound breath whispered her name and “ Good-by, dear love,” or if she heard that he did so, or if she were there, or he with her, or how they met, — only she knew that they met, and she drew in that icy

farewell and felt it carry death to the warm life-springs of her heart.

A deadly chill, a swooning sickness, a veil of utter blackness and oblivion, a sense of falling from some immeasurable height into unfathomable depths, and she knew no more until a sweet yet sharpened voice exclaimed : —

“What foolishness! I knew you’d scare the life out of her some way!”

And wearily opening her eyes, she met Priscilla’s anxious and loving gaze, and at the same time felt her head raised and a cup put to her lips.

“What’s that now? What witch-broth are you giving her?” demanded Priscilla.

“A little sperit-and-water. Just about what your father has given many a time to fainting folk,” replied mother Crewe, sullenly; and Hannah, sipping a little, felt warmth return to her frozen veins, and in a few moments was able to take her place in the chaise, and, leaning back in the corner, to slowly recover her full consciousness and memory.

Priscilla, who was vexed and unhappy, and also in a great hurry, urged the old horse on, and remained silent until her companion softly asked : —

“What’s Christmas, Pris?”

“Christmas? Why, one of the Popish mummeries, when they burn spirits in a bowl and play games. We don’t hold to such doings in this country, you know. I’ve heard father tell of it when he was in England, and how the men kissed the maids under a branch of a tree hung up.”

“But — is it — is it somebody’s birthday?” hesitated Hannah, dreamily.

" Birthday — well there, perhaps it is the Pope o' Rome's ! It seems to me as if something was said of a birthday ; but it 's Popish, anyway, and we've naught to do with it. Did mother Crewe tell you about it ? "

" Yes — n — o — I can't tell," stammered Hannah, and Priscilla angrily flicked Wally's ears, and drove home through the gathering December twilight.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A WOFUL DAY. — A PITEOUS SIGHT.

CHRISTMAS EVE, in the Year of our Lord 1778, fell upon a Thursday, and while those of the patriots remaining in Boston who had hearts large enough to combine resistance to England's tyranny with loyalty to England's Church kept the festival as best they might, Captain Magee, of the privateer brigantine General Arnold, mounting twenty guns and carrying a hundred and five men and boys as her crew, selected it as his day for sailing out of Boston, bound on a cruise.

Captain Magee, by birth an Irish Protestant and by nature a hero, neither knew nor cared much about Christmas Eve, but he knew and cared a great deal about sailors, and would have been very sorry to begin his voyage on a Friday, knowing that it would be logged unlucky by every man and boy of his hundred and five; yes, even by Tommy Marchant, the hundred and sixth, a young gentleman aged ten, whom the captain had good-naturedly promised to deliver to his friends at Martha's Vineyard, when he should put in at Holmes Hole.

So, hurrying matters a little, the General Arnold took her formal departure from Long Wharf about sunset on Christmas Eve, with an ominous sky overhead, and a sullen and moody west wind astern.

"Dirty weather ahead, Captain," remarked Jethro Coffin, master's mate, and a man whose years and wisdom gave him leave to speak.

"We'll make dirty weather for the first fat prize we come across, Master," replied the captain, cheerily, and the ancient mariner walked forward, saying in his throat,

"Hope we'll get as far as old Nantucket, anyway ; I'd rather lay my bones there, than" —

The boatswain's whistle piping to supper cut short the wish, and the Fates denied it.

A baffling and anxious night passed, and Christmas Day broke with every storm-sign augmented and imminent. About noon the variable wind settled into the northeast, and speedily rose to a gale. Failing to reach the open sea, Magee resolved to run into Plymouth Harbor, and at nightfall, under storm stay-sails and with two men at the helm, drove past the Gurnet, and unable to signal for a pilot in the darkness, anchored in the Cow Yard. But still the storm gathered force, and the gale rose to its height, bringing in fierce bursts of sleet and frozen snow, covering decks, masts, and rigging with armor of ice. The cables strained, moaned like gigantic harpstrings, and finally parted with an explosion like thunder. Driving like a plaything before the fury of the storm, the brigantine plunged forward and struck heavily upon White Flat, burying her nose in the sand like some poor wounded monster, checked in mid career by the hunter's bullet in his shoulder.

"Cut away the masts and hamper, and she may drive over," shouted the captain in Coffin's ear, and through the shrieks of the wind came the hoarse bellow of the trumpet, and the ominous order : —

"Cut away the main-mast" — and the rest was lost in a howl of the wind.

Saturday morning dawned in such a fury of winter storm as makes its record upon the history of a country.

Wind, and sea, and sleet, and snow, and frozen foam torn from the crests of the waves, washing contemptuously all over the decks, dashed like ammunition into the faces of men who defied human foes and laughed at their menace, but who cowered aghast at the malignant fury of the elements.

Beating upon the hard sands of the Flat, the vessel had bilged and settled by the head, so that every sea broke over the main deck, and the crew huddled upon the quarter deck, where now one and then another, stifled by the snow, stunned by the waves, frozen to icicles as they clung to the only shrouds they should ever know, fell and died, or died in such attitudes of life that their comrades shouted counsel into dead ears.

"The men are at the spirit-cask!" cried the first officer in the captain's ear, and repeated it, until word by word it was snatched from the tempest.

The two looked at each other, and without more ado made their way down the companion, and forward to where, just out of reach of the flood washing the main deck, a crowd of sailors and mariners clung like bees around the cask of rum, broached only the day before, and so ravenously drowned their sorrow in the fiery liquid that a dozen or more had drowned their bodies as well, and washed hither and thither in the flood amidships. The captain looked, raised his voice, and shouted a command neither heard nor heeded, then nodding to his officer to imitate him, seized an axe thrown aside after cutting the masts away, and swinging it around his head, brought it down so squarely upon the head of the cask, as it lay upon its side, as to start the seasoned oak from its grooves, and let the poison out in a stream. A wild howl of rage and defiance rose from

desperate lips, and oaths and menaces mingled upon the air with the fumes of the spirit; but the axe was keen and heavy, and the captain's eye was resolute, and no resistance was made. Another blow and another, and the cask lay a wreck, with perhaps a gallon or two of the spirits in the bottom. Over this, the captain mounted guard with a pannikin in his hand, and after pouring a portion into the top of each of his high sea-boots, beckoned the lieutenant and did the same for him, with as many of the men as would submit; and those men had no frozen feet, and many of them were among the survivors, while those who drank and slept, or drank and raved, were among the first to die.

"Tommy Marchant!" roared the captain, in the ear of old Coffin, who had been by his side in the incipient mutiny, and the Nantucket man nodded and scrambled aft, presently returning with a little muffled figure in his arms, half carrying, half guiding it, until, just in reach of the captain's arm, both stumbled and fell before a swoop of the tempest almost like the snatch of a personal fiend, and as the captain, darting forward, seized the boy, the man whirled over and over like a dead leaf, flew over the side, and was seen no more.

"God save him!" cried the captain, and it was as good a funeral service as that in the Prayer-Book.

"Must we go too, Captain?" gasped little Marchant, his blue lips at the captain's ear.

"No, my boy! Your mother's waiting for you, and you must n't break her heart. Live for her sake, lad!"

Not many of the words reached the little fellow's ear, but the tone did, and the words "mother" and "break her heart," and shaking himself together he smiled with piteous cheeriness and said, "Oh, yes, I'll see mother

again." Years after, when he was an old man there at the Vineyard, Tom Marchant said that Captain Magee saved his life by his brave words, and by the rum with which he filled his little boots.

And now another blow was struck at that doomed crew. Within hail of the General Arnold lay a small schooner frozen into the ice extending far out from the beach, across which the icy seas were combing, and although she was too small and too feebly manned to do anything for the assistance of the brigantine, she was a harbor of refuge for as many of the wrecked crew as could reach her. Thinking of this as he made his way back to the quarter deck, the captain, casting an eye upon the davits where swung no boats, for all had been stove at the first, said to himself, "There is still the yawl, and if I can keep order, most of those able to move may still be saved."

But hardly were his shoulders above the companion-way, when something was tossed into the air between him and the skies, and with a gasp, that wellnigh had been his last, for it filled his lungs with ice, the commander recognized the yawl, stolen in his absence by a few wretches who heeded not how many were left to die. To be sure, they flung back a promise that the boat should be returned by some of the schooner's men, but instead, it lay on the edge of the ice and stove in sight of those who died for need of it, and yet are less to be pitied than the deserters who lived and came ashore to hear men's minds of their conduct.

The night passed for a few, but for the many it was they who passed, let us hope from death to life, from storm to calm, from conflict to eternal rest.

Sunday morning broke, and still the winds and the

seas raged, even more fiercely than at the first, although the snow had ceased, and the air was cleared enough to let the survivors see the beach not a mile away, and farther on the town where the captain with his glass could make out men cutting away the boats near the wharves, and others running such as were free across the ice, and launching them in the churning flood of water, snow, ice, and wreckage running furiously through the channel.

Soon the men themselves, as the air cleared with the breaking of the storm, could see the efforts made, and a sudden hope, a wild excitement and hurry, took possession of their half-crazed brains, so that they shouted and danced and shook each other's hands, and stood with foot and hand upraised ready to step upon the rescuing boat, not yet within hail. But alas, and alas! the elements were still too mighty in their wrath to give place to man, and strive as they might, the brave Plymouth men were beaten back, and all but wrecked themselves, and more than one tossed senseless upon the ice from a shattered boat, so that at last, as night fell, they sadly gave over their efforts and began a retreat. Then indeed did despair fall upon those dying men, and as the Plymouth boats turned back such a wail went up from the doomed ship as those who lived to tell of it shuddered in recalling, even when years had passed; and many a one, losing all hope, lost life as well, and fell prone upon the deck.

The night passed, but even staunch Magee, strong young fellow though he was, and brave and vigilant commander to the last, could never recall how. All that he remembered was fiercely shaking Tommy Marchant, and forcing him to pace the deck, half asleep as they both were, and more than half dead.

But with Monday came a clear sky and a subsiding sea and wind. By noon the Plymouth men were on board, and not one among them ever dared fully describe the sight. Seventy-two dead men and near thirty dying ones confronted them, the dead frozen into all imaginable attitudes: some erect and staring blankly out of eyes filled with ice; some clinging desperately to ropes, or spars, or to the dead bodies beside them, their ghastly faces turned toward the shore; some grinning in fierce defiance of their pain; some crouched, their faces hidden upon their knees; some fallen flat, with arms desperately clutched upon some broken hope. Even Magee in his own account says, "The scene was one, the particulars of which would shock the least delicate humanity."

Of those who lived, most were insensible, and the captain, wild of eye and stammering of speech, only retained his senses by such a superhuman effort as changed him from a very vigorous young man to stern middle age.

And still in his arms he held the boy, close wrapped, and now fast asleep.

"You'd better wake little Marchant, gentlemen," were the first words he spoke to the rescue crew, and men say the ghastly smile upon his face was as awful as any sight upon that quarter deck.

In boats on the ice, and then upon sledges hastily nailed together, they brought them all ashore, the living to the houses hospitably thrown open upon every hand, — for when was Plymouth less than eager in her hospitality? — and the dead to the Town Hall, at the foot of Burying Hill, where all the doctors in the town, and there were several in those days, had hastily

assembled, and where it was found that many set apart as dead still showed signs of life, and with cruel kindness were revived.

One poor fellow named Downs, from Barnstable, left for dead, was seen to move an eyelash, and being laid in a trough of ice water revived, but in such torture that his shrieks were heard all through the village. Even so the blood could not penetrate his feet, and both were lost. But he lived to be an old man, and told his story to children and children's children.

Tommy Marchant slept for two days, and woke up very hungry but perfectly well, and not long after was sent safely to his mother, who, though too good a Protestant to know the names of the Saints, canonized James Magee.

The officers and those of the men who had friends to claim them were placed in coffins for removal or separate sepulture, and never from the days of the Pilgrims to to-day has so grewsome a sight been seen in Plymouth as when those distorted bodies were anchored in the Town Brook, floating there until the cold water should straighten them for the grave. The others, some sixty unknown men, were reverently laid together in a great pit at the southwestern corner of Burying Hill, and years after, some pitiful soul, not of their kith or kin, raised a monument over them, beside which you may stand and in the twilight of the sweet summer day picture to yourself that long-past tragedy, until moving to the eastern brow of the hill you look out upon the silvery sparkle of White's Flat and the pretty dancing ripples of the Cow Yard, and wonder once again at the unsympathy of Nature.

Captain Magee, who lived some years and made sev-

eral voyages after this, but never was quite himself again, became the guest of S'uth'ard Howland, and the recipient of more attention and more delicate cates and more questions than were welcome to his shattered system. One of these latter we may understand better than he did. It was just at night on the second day of his stay, the day before the Rev. Chandler Robbins and Parson Hovey were to say the funeral service over the dead. The captain was for the moment alone, when the door softly opened to admit a figure so pallid, so slight, so noiseless, that he almost thought it a ghost, until she softly said: —

“I am Mr. Howland's sister, Captain Magee, and I much wish to ask you a question. Did a man named Ansel Ring sail among your ship's crew?”

“I — excuse me, madam, but I am easily startled in these days. Ansel Ring? No, I remember no such name, and although, of course, I could not know all my crew so soon, I surely should have noted such a name on the books. Do you think he was on board?”

“Yes — I know he was.”

“Well, madam, the living are few enough to be easily numbered, and the dead were all recovered, or nearly all.”

“I must search among that fearful company in the Town Hall, then?”

“No, no, it is no sight for you — indeed, my dear young lady, it is no sight for you.”

“Thank you, sir, and good-night.”

The next day, when the funeral services were held, and Chandler Robbins looked, for the first time, upon the forms and faces of those sixty unknown men, he fainted in the extremity of his pity and dismay. All

the men of the town were there, and a few women ; one, deeply veiled and not recognized, looked with unflinching eye upon a sight too terrible for the strong men, and finally took her stand beside a form identified by no eyes save those of hopeless love.

All was over, and in that great grave beneath the kindly monument Ansel Ring rests in peace, himself and his story alike forgotten, save in the books where all things are recorded.¹

¹ The " Magee Shipwreck " occurred exactly as here narrated, and a monument erected to the memory of the seventy-two seamen still marks the resting-place of sixty of their number on Burying Hill, Plymouth, Mass.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

DEBORAH FIRES A SALUTE OF HONOR.

AGAIN the Fathers of Plymouth were assembled in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall considering the interests of their townsmen and of the Colony ; but now they called themselves the Committee of Safety instead of Selectmen, and now, more than formerly, the real power of government was vested in the hands of a body to which their constituents looked with confidence for protection against not only the powerful enemy menacing without, but the enemy within their own borders, the men with whom they had grown up in friendly intercourse and brotherly love, but who to-day stood ready at the command of King George to meet them hand to hand in deadly contest, and who sneered aloud at all which the patriots held most sacred and most dear.

Into the councils of this responsible body, as some fifteen years before into those of the Selectmen, and as a great many years before into those of the gods, penetrated a woman so filled with the importance of her own business as to easily set aside those masculine deliberations which, being slow and methodical, can be better interrupted and taken up again than the intuitional processes of feminine reason. Yes, I said *reason*.

As on that former occasion, James Warren filled the Chair and guided the minds of his colleagues, although

a younger man than the one of fifteen years before ; for James Warren, husband of Penelope Winslow, lay in peace upon Burying Hill beside his haughty wife, and this was their son, Major-General James Warren, Chief of the Massachusetts Militia, foremost among the patriots of the Old Colony, and husband of that Mercy Otis Warren whose *History of the Revolution* and correspondence with Adams have placed her beside Sévigné and Staël and Roland. In many respects, however, this James Warren strongly resembled his father, and in nothing more than in the courtesy, the gentleness, and the simplicity of their mutual manners. To him the intruder addressed herself, walking calmly up to the table and standing erect beside it, while he ceremoniously rose to receive the comely matron, whose presence the spirit of the day taught him to consider an unwelcome intrusion.

“Good-morrow to you, General Warren, and to you all, gentlemen.”

“Good-morrow to you, Mrs. Samson. Will you be seated, and inform us ” —

“Nay, I’ve no time for ceremony, and to inform you of my errand is what I’m here for. Captain Samson has been exchanged, and is on his way home in a cartel out of Halifax. He wrote me so much from Boston, where he is held a while for some formalities, but will be down to-morrow, wind and weather permitting.”

“Thank you very much, Mrs. Samson, for your attention in bringing us this news, but we have already received it by an official communication through the post-office,” replied Warren with a bow as of dismissal, but Deborah held her ground.

“And what notice does the town plan to take of Captain Samson’s return?” asked she, quietly.

“Notice? — why really — we shall all of course pay our respects, madam, and — yes — we may, I think, offer the captain a dinner, a banquet of welcome and congratulation upon his gallant and noble services. Is not that our mind, gentlemen?”

Murmurs of assent rose from mouths more or less sternly closed in reprobation of a woman’s presence among them, and William Watson quietly suggested: —

“Perhaps it will be better to wait until Captain Samson is here, and make our arrangements with him. It would be to my mind more seemly.”

“And to mine,” added Colonel Theophilus Cotton, briefly.

“A moment, gentlemen. When once Captain Samson is at home he will take his place as master of his own house and his own motions, and will accept or decline your dinners and your banquets as he chooses. But my errand is to know in what fashion the town means to welcome her naval commander and defender so soon as he shall appear in her harbor. To my mind, a salute of twelve guns from the battery on Cole’s Hill, and the ringing of the bells and flying of the flags for an hour, were a very pretty attention, although not enough. If the militia were to turn out, or at the least Captain Hammatt’s company, with the band, and escort him up to his house, it would be better. But what is your own plan, gentlemen?”

The members of the Committee looked at each other with the puzzled and appealing gaze common to men who find themselves suddenly cornered by woman’s illogical but irresistible deductions from premises they

have not yet got round to considering after their own methods, and Warren, looking far more foolish than he ever did in face of the British, replied truthfully but helplessly, —

“We had not thought of it, Mrs. Samson, and I — I don’t know — we have no precedent — you know, madam, that we honor and value Captain Samson quite as much as you can” — But an irrepressible smile upon the faces of some of his colleagues suggesting to the Chairman that the Committee of Safety could hardly claim the devotion of a wife to Captain Samson, he hesitated, cleared his throat, and finally with an appealing look around him remarked: “I suppose we had better concert some action such as — such as is suggested, had we not, gentlemen?”

“We probably should have, without interference,” replied Watson severely, if mendaciously, and the rest assented more or less positively. Deborah’s bright dark eyes rested attentively upon each face, and a somewhat triumphant smile just passed across a mouth a trifle too resolute for feminine beauty, but full of promise should the need for decisive action come.

“I’ll leave you then, sirs, to your deliberations, asking pardon that I should have interrupted them, since you were already minded to do as I wish; but should your deputies forget or neglect to obey your commands in this matter of the salute, I live close beside the battery, and will with my own hands fire off the guns, yes, and find the powder and load them, too, if need be. You won’t forget about the flags, General Warren, and the joy-bells?”

“We will arrange everything, madam, in the manner most fitting to do honor to your noble husband.”

“And to yourselves, gentlemen. Good-morning to you all.”

And so it came about that when the privateer schooner *Wasp* sailed into Plymouth Harbor, bringing Simeon Samson and the clock he had carved at Fort Cumberland, the battery on Cole's Hill was manned, and among the rest two old guns from the Fort upon Burying Hill, which Myles Standish had fired many a time and oft, and loved as his own children, roared out their hoarse note of welcome to the great-grandson of the veteran as he came home in honor, wearing the sword that Dawson had refused to receive, and with his tattered ensign waving above his head; for England, who loves a brave and audacious man even as did her maiden queen, had treated her foeman in this case as might Sydney, or any other paladin of chivalry, and sent him home with no sign of defeat.

Answering to the war-worn ensign a gorgeous banner flew to the top of the staff cresting the house on Middle Street, and Samson, who had fixed his expectant glass upon that roof, cleared his throat as it floated joyously out and muttered: “God bless you, Deb!”

But it was all too much for Myles's guns. Old folks do not bear much excitement, or strong emotion, and before the last salute they both had burst their hearts, and never spoke again.

CHAPTER XL.

MADAM WINSLOW'S ARMCHAIR.

SUCCESSFUL endeavor, as we all know, brings the opportunity for fresh exertion, and Captain Simeon Samson had hardly eaten the dinner and modestly returned thanks for the ovation proffered him by his townsmen, when he received his appointment to the brig Hazard, and soon after to the Mercury, a ship built for Congress by Mr. John Peck, grandson of that widow Jackson who lived in the Spooner house on North Street, and kept in it a chocolate shop of lasting fame. Mr. Peck's shipyard was at the foot of Leyden Street, and is now covered by a garden.

Finally, to Deborah's huge satisfaction, her husband took command of the Mars, the Colony's most important war-vessel, and in it not only carried dispatches and envoys to Holland and France, but captured some important prizes, among others the British flag-ship Trial.

The very last time that he sailed out of Plymouth as commandant of a war-ship, he met with one of those curious coincidences which help to buttress the truism that truth is stranger than fiction.

Languidly fanned outside the Gurnet by a dying breeze, the Mars found herself within hail of a schooner laden to the water's edge, and carrying a very singular appendage over her stern board in the shape of a huge

square package carefully enveloped in oilcloth. The stately figure of a gentleman dressed in the elaborate style of the day stood motionless upon the tiny quarter deck, while sailors, black servants, livestock, and many crates, boxes, and barrels sunk the schooner almost level with the water.

"The late Collector's craft, is n't it, Dyer?" asked the captain in a low voice of his first lieutenant, as they stood at the head of the companion-way.

"Yes, Captain. He's bound off for good. Got a permit from the Provincial Government to remove to New York, where they say Governor Clinton has given him a position worth £200 a year, with fuel and rations."

"Yes, I heard it. I would have delayed a tide rather than run foul of him, feeling as he must feel to-day. A Winslow running away from Plymouth Rock because he can't breathe the air of Liberty is but a sorry sight."

"Most as bad as a Standish turning timid," said Dyer, not unwilling to flatter his commander.

"That's a sight never seen yet, call it Standish or Samson," replied Samson, with the simplicity of acknowledged heroism. "But what is that the schooner carries astern, like the bag of a honey-bee?"

"Something of the same nature, Captain," replied Dyer, laughing grimly, "for it's the provision for a rainy day. It's one of those great square stuffed arm-chairs women love to cover in white dimity and set in the spare bedroom, and Madam Winslow thought it would be a tidy place to store away her silver teapot and such like matters, so she ripped off the cover, pulled out the horsehair, and stuffed the back and sides with pretty much all the silverware and trinkets that they've

kept through all their troubles. To be sure they've a safe-conduct, but I suppose she fancied the privateers might not respect it, so" —

"And did she take you into her confidence, lieutenant, or how did you pick up this wonderful story?"

"It all came out through Betty Kempton, who has for years done Madam Winslow's extra sewing and odd jobs, and so being called upon to help re-stuff and re-cover the armchair, she knew all about it. She swore by all that's holy not to tell the secret, but you know what a woman's tongue is, Captain, and she did n't sleep till she'd sworn three others to secrecy, and one of them told it to me, advising that we should capture the armchair and divide the booty."

"That woman ought to have been towed out of port astern of the stern-load," remarked the captain. "Do you remember, Dyer, that it was on the first day of our first cruise in the Independence we spoke this same craft? The old wives would say 't is an omen this will be our last cruise."

And the captain laughed scornfully, and yet with a latent thrill of that superstition somehow engendered by the sea.

"I wish she had got away instead of lying by to cross our course," replied Dyer, in the same tone. "Shall I hail?"

"Yes, hail — no, give me the trumpet. I want to show all the consideration we can to the old man."

"Ahoy! What schooner is that?"

"The King's Own, bound for His Majesty's loyal town of New York. If you are a naval commander belonging to any honorable nation, I warn you that Plymouth, the port we have just left, is filled with a

swarm of cowardly rebels to King George of England, whose company loyal citizens must escape, although they leave all behind them."

"This is the ship-of-war Mars, belonging to the Provincial Government, and is bound to protect all loyal citizens, especially if they sail under safe-conduct from the sovereigns of this country. A good voyage to you, sir, and a safe arrival."

And with a wind that caught her lofty royals, but refused to notice the schooner's lowlier canvas, the stately ship swept on, carrying Simeon Samson and Dyer upon their last cruise.

"Eight bells, sir."

"Make it so, and pipe the men to dinner."

Eight bells it was in Kingston woods that day, when Mary Clark, wife of Beniah, and mistress of his little farm, his rude cabin, and his horde of tow-headed children, glanced at the noon mark upon the floor, and seizing a tin horn went to the door to summon her family to dinner. But with the horn half way to her lips she paused, staring in amazement at a figure resting against one of the first trees in the wood-road leading from the cabin to the highway. It was that of a tall and slight young man, apparently very much fatigued, and yet irresolute as to pausing. A stranger of any sort was a rare and refreshing sight to Mary's eyes, but this stranger was also young, good-looking, weary, and depressed, and the heart of the woman went out to him so genially that, dropping the hand holding the horn, she stepped down upon the turf, and moving slowly toward him smiled graciously, saying, —

"Good-day, young man. Was you a-coming to our house?"

Thus invited, the stranger approached, critically examining the speaker out of a pair of keen hazel eyes, but seeing nothing more alarming than a gaunt, yellow, middle-aged woman, with hay-colored hair done up in a tight knot, and a smiling toothless mouth, he removed the cap from his curly brown locks, and bowing politely, said : —

“ Good-morning, madam ! I am on my way to Plymouth, and have missed my way in the woods. Can you tell me how to strike the highway from here ? ”

“ Plymouth ! Why, I don’t seem to remember seeing you down to Plymouth. Do your folks live there ? ”

“ No — I ’m going to engage as a sailor. ”

“ You don’t say ! Why you don’t look very rugged, young man, and I ’m most afraid it ’ll be too much for you. Was your folks willing to let you go ? ”

“ They don’t know it yet. I am going to write as soon as I know where I shall be. I am going to ship aboard the Mars, Captain Simeon Samson’s new ship. ”

“ Well, now, you don’t say ! I declare for ’t, I ’m ’fraid you won’t stand it ” —

“ Will you please tell me the road to Plymouth ? ”

“ Good land, you can’t go no further before dinner. There, I most forgot the vittles is cooling on the table. ”

And raising the horn, Mrs. Clark blew a peal loud and long, resulting almost immediately in a descent from all directions of the tow-headed children, and among them a slow and lumbering man, whom the hostess called “ he,” and who welcomed the stranger with that slow and grave hospitality habitual to men living much apart from their kind.

“ There, set up and eat, — set up, Mr. — what name shall I call you ? ”

"My name is Robert, — Robert Shurtliffe, madam."

"Shurtliffe — well, there was Shurtliffes over Middleboro' way — Jim, you keep your spoon out o' the vittles till your pa and the stranger's got some. Sail right in, Robert, and get your share."

So adjured, the stranger, drawing his stool close to the table, took one of the horn spoons laid ready, and joined without ceremony in the attack upon a mountain of string beans, interspersed with bits of salt pork cut into mouthfuls, and forming the dainty bits of the feast. Beans and pork were heaped in a large wooden bowl, set in the middle of the table, and neither plates, knives, forks, nor other conveniences of the table were visible. A stone pitcher of cider with a pewter mug stood at one end of the table, and a wooden trencher with some pieces of rye-and-indian bread at the other; and such as it was, the meal was a feast, for string beans were not always to be had, and dried ones were no rarity.

Robert Shurtliffe, however, had often eaten as rude a meal, for this was the ordinary style of dining among the poorer classes of his day, especially in rural districts, and as he was very hungry, he secured his share of the beans and the bits of pork which, but for their mother's vigilance, would all have been gobbled by the children, and finishing with a hunch of the brown bread and a good draught of cider, declared himself so refreshed as to be again ready for the road.

"Well, now, you hold on a minute, Bob," exclaimed the hostess, as this resolution was declared. "Father, be you going to use the horse this afternoon? You know I was talking some of going down to trade my yarn for sugar and stuff, and I'd jest as lief take this

feller along, and Johnny, he can trot down afoot, and come home with me."

"Dunno 'bout lettin' you go off with such a smart young chap all alone," replied the husband, with a slow grin of rustic humor. "He might steal you and the horse too, and I should miss the horse consid'able!"

When was a woman too gaunt, too labor-worn, or too toothless to refuse an implied confession of her power over the other sex? And Mrs. Clark washed herself with soft soap, combed and flattened her sparse hay-colored hair, and donned her linseywoolsey gown, her buckled shoes, and her green silk calash, with a happy simper upon her toothless mouth that went far to revive its original comeliness.

Dobbin, astonished at some vague attempt to cleanse and smooth his ragged pelt, was brought to the door, a pillion attached to the back of the saddle, and with the happy simper expanded to a blithesome grin, Mary Clark was swung to her seat by her husband's stalwart arm, and immediately folded her own around the waist of the gallant young cavalier already in the saddle.

"There, don't hug the fellow too hard, old woman!" exclaimed the farmer, with a hoarse laugh and a suggestive smack upon Dobbin's flank that left its impress in dust upon that worthy animal's hair, and induced him to move stiffly toward the road, where he presently was urged into a heart-breaking trot, not so rapid but that Johnny easily kept up with him, the boy's little brown feet patting luxuriously along in the soft dust, in gentle harmony with the thud of Dobbin's heavy hoofs.

"Want to go to Cap'n Samson's, do ye?" asked the modern Dejanira as her cavalier made known his destination. "Well, that's right down King Street, that

they 're trying to remember to call Middle Street since we 're off with the king and the tea-tax. There, right down North Street here, and round Cole's Hill; the Cap'n lives last house on Middle Street, to'rst the hill, where he can glimp the harbor as often as he 's a mind ter. There, here we be, and that's the house, and that's Mrs. Samson up a-top the ruff, a-haulin' down her flag. Well, Bob, I'm real glad to have met you, and I've enjoyed my ride first-rate. Good-by, and thank you kindly for your company, and I'll not forget you in a hurry. Jump up, Johnny."

"And, Johnny, here 's a sixpence for you to buy some nuts or figs, if you like; and, Mrs. Clark, will you take this ribbon that I chanced to have in my pocket, and make a breastknot of it to wear in memory of the poor sailor lad you treated so kindly, and who won't forget you? No, no, no thanks. Good-by, madam, good-by."

CHAPTER XLI.

A QUILTING BEE AND A SING.

THE house door stood wide open, as house doors in Plymouth always did in the good old times, and Robert Shurtliffe, wishing to escape from the somewhat effusive thanks of his late hostess, walked in somewhat hurriedly, and gravitating by instinct toward the kitchen, entered, looked about, and attracted by the open window, crossed toward it, and stood looking out at the glowing flower-beds, until a quick yet decided footstep came hurriedly down the stairs, only divided by a bulk-head from the kitchen, and Deborah Samson paused upon the lowest step to stare in astonishment at the tall stripling, who in some confusion turned and bowed.

“Why, who is this!” exclaimed she, slowly stepping off the stair.

“I have come to see Captain Samson, madam. You are no doubt his wife.”

“Yes, and I have but now lost sight of the topsail of the Mars, as she took my husband out to sea.”

“Sailed! Has the captain sailed?”

“He has, young man; sailed just before noon to-day.”

“Oh, the luck of it, the luck of it!” And the young fellow strode up and down the room, clenching his fists and grinding his teeth, but not swearing.

“Why are you so put about? What was your business with Captain Samson?” demanded Deborah, in astonishment.

"Why, I've traveled fifty mile to sail with him. I'm bound to fight the British, and of a^{ll} commanders that step I'd rather sail and fight under Samson than any other."

"And you're right, my lad, if hard knocks are what you're looking for. There's fighting to be had by those who sail under Simeon Samson's flag," replied the wife, proudly, and then she added in a gentler tone: "Indeed, I'm sorry for you, young man, for you've missed a rare chance. The Mars is the Colony's best ship and Samson's not its worst commandant, so you'll hardly find another voyage to your mind after losing that. Do you come from far?"

"Bridgewater way," replied the youth, briefly. "I suppose my best plan now will be to get a passage up to Boston, and ship from there."

"Why, yes, I suppose so, but for to-night you'd better stop here. I won't say in my house, because of the speech o' people, and Plymouth women's tongues are hung in the middle, so that both ends can wag; but S'uth'ard Howland will put you up for nothing if you're a soldier or a sailor on the right side, and I'll give you your supper and breakfast, or, if you like it better, I'll take you along with me to a supper and a sing and maybe a dance over T'other Side. They've had a quilting bee this afternoon and I was to go, but so long as the sky-scraper of the Mars was above the horizon, my flag and I held our post a-top of the house. But now he's gone, and I feel more than a bit lonesome, I thought I'd step over,—I love to hear the folks talk about the cap'n, and that's a fact."

A flush of pride overspread the comely face of the captain's wife, and the guest impulsively cried:—

“To belong to such a man as that is better than to be a man yourself.”

“I don’t believe a *man* ever thought that way before,” replied Deborah, laughing a little shamefacedly. “Well, will you take up with my offer, — and what name may I call you, young man?”

“Robert Shurtliffe, at your service, madam, and I shall be very thankful to go with you to the dance, for I love it amazingly.”

“Oh, the dance — well, I was not laying out to stop for that. Now my husband’s gone, it behooves me to be more than prudent, and truth to tell, when your heart’s away your feet are shod with lead. But I admire to hear ’em sing over there; they reel off those old fuguing tunes as easy as I’d reel off a skein of yarn. There’s Jesse Churchill, and Andrew Crosswell, and Sam Sherman, and Billy Bartlett, that lead the singing in meeting since we’ve concluded ’tain’t wicked to praise the Lord in tune, ’stead o’ braying at Him like dumb cattle or jackasses, and then there’s a lot o’ the folks come in on a chorus; and I do feel as if it would be sort of comforting to me to-night to hear how

‘On cherub and on cherubim,
Full royally He rode;
And on the wings of mighty winds
Came flying all abroad.’

It’s good hearing for a sailor’s wife that there’s One in the winds that can furl ’em as easy as a good crew can furl a tops’l in fair weather.”

“Yes,” replied the visitor, softly, so softly that Deborah looked keenly at him, and said: —

“You’ve a tender heart as yet, my lad, and you’ll be none the worse a sailor or a fighter for it. My Sim’s

as tender as a woman when he's o' mind to be. But there — what did you call your name?"

"Robert Shurtliffe, mistress."

"Why — it seems as if I'd heard that name — Robert Shurtliffe, Shurtliffe, — Shurtliffe? Yes, I've heard it sure."

"'Tis a common name enough in some parts of the country. May I wash and brush some of this dust away before we go to the da — the sing?"

"Yes, indeed. Step right out in the back kitchen. Here's water and soap, and there's a bunch o' broom for your clothes, and you can button the door if you've a mind, though there's nobody in the house but me, for the children are all away till bedtime. I could n't bear having them under foot while I was seeing their father off, so he kissed 'em good-by as soon as the breakfast dishes were done up, and then Lydia, that's my oldest girl, took little Patty and went over to the Goodwins' to spend the day, — Lydia's a good girl and I shall miss her terribly when she marries Billy Goodwin, and I suppose it will be before her father comes home, — and Deb and the boys went over to Ponds to spend the day and night with Dominicus Hovey's young folks, son of old Parson Hovey that you may have heard of; — but there, go and have your wash, and I'll step into the bedroom and get ready. Strange how that name, Robert Shurtliffe, runs in my brain."

The guest smiled but said nothing, and a little later hostess and guest set forth upon their long walk, Mrs. Samson latching the house door as she came out, with the remark, —

"Seems kind of unfriendly to shut the door, but dogs and cats will stray in if I leave it open. Lyddy'll be

along pretty soon to put Patty to bed, and I think like enough Billy 'll come along to keep her company till I get home."

"Is Billy Goodwin grandson of the old French doctor? I heard that his daughter married a Goodwin," said Shurtliffe.

"Well, the 'French doctor' was the old original Dr. LeBaron, dead and gone these many years. He had a son, Dr. Lazarus LeBaron, that is the one you mean, I guess, and he had a daughter, Lyddy, who married Nat Goodwin, and Billy is their son, and grandson of Dr. Lazarus, you see."

"Dr. Lazarus and one of his daughters, but not that one, used to come over to Plympton to see some folks I knew when I was a little boy," said Shurtliffe, and his hostess eyed him attentively by the failing summer twilight as she asked:—

"Folks by the name of Shurtliffe?"

"No, it was—why, now I think of it, 't was the same name as yours, the name of Samson."

"Yes, the widow of Jonathan Samson," replied Deborah, quietly. "They were cousins of my husband, and I know all about them. Jonathan was wronged out of the property left him by his father, but while he was away his sister's husband got hold of it and never let it go again. So Jonathan ran away from his troubles, and his wife broke down under them, and had to put her children out. There were two boys and a girl, but what were their names now? Seems to me the girl was named Deborah, like me"—

"The Samsons have never been a very lucky family," interrupted Robert Shurtliffe, rather abruptly. "Did you ever hear of uncle Jedediah, that is he'd be your

husband's uncle Jedediah, who had a farm that come to him from his own father, and was living on it there in Plympton, when along came Consider Howland, and said that land was entailed on him by *his* father, Thomas Howland, and the law was with him and he took it, leaving poor uncle Jed homeless? "

"Yes, the Howlands love land, and don't love to let go of it. You seem to take a good deal of interest in the Samsons, young man."

"Well, yes, I knew them pretty well. I guess that's the house we're going to, is n't it? "

"Yes, looks like they had a good many folks there already, but I imagine there'll be room for us. Come in this way. Here's Mrs. Churchill, now."

"Well, there, Deborah, I'm dreadful glad to see you. We began to be afraid you wa'n't coming; and this is a friend of yours? "

"Yes, a cousin of ours come to sail with the captain, but got here a little too late," replied Deborah with a keen side-glance. "Robert Shurtliffe, he calls himself, and, Robert, this is Mrs. Churchill."

"Very glad to see you, sir, and much obliged to Mrs. Samson for bringing you. There'll be some dancing after a while, and the girls will be pleased enough to have such a fine new beau."

"I will do my best to foot a reel or so, madam, though I'm afraid a poor country bumpkin like me will cut a poor figger among such genteel young ladies as I see here."

Now 'beau,' and 'figger,' and 'genteel,' were touches of elegant verbiage in those days, and this little colloquy partook of "Shakespeare and the musical glasses," quite as much as an esthetic discourse upon hypnotism or Browning would to-day.

"Come out and have some supper first of all," pursued the hostess, her jolly sides shaking with comfortable laughter. "They 're just setting down, and you shall have a place next the prettiest girl in the room, Mr. Bumpkin, as you call yourself."

And with a little elbowing, a little joking, and an illustration of the sporting maxim that "weight tells," Mrs. Churchill made a passage through the merry crowd, and ushered her guests into a delightful kitchen extending across the whole rear of the farmhouse, its eastern side pierced with four wide and low casements, opening upon the sea and Manomet, and its western, with two huge cavernous stone fireplaces, each provided with a "mantle-tr'e" full of candlesticks and such matters, with a brick oven, and with full sets of andirons, fire-irons, cranes, pot-hooks and trammels, benches within the fireplace, and great oaken settles beside them. At either end of the hall-like room rose a great dresser, its shelves glittering with pewter and delf; and two doors opened into two pantries replete with dainties.

Time had been, in the bygone days, when a partition dividing the two fireplaces and the four casements had secured a separate domain to each of the wives of two brothers then owning the house; but now, brothers and wives had every one obtained a still more personal and secluded dwelling place, and the heirs, becoming one family, had thrown down the partition and secured to themselves an ideal kitchen for such an occasion as the present.

An improvised table running down the centre of the room creaked and groaned dismally beneath the weight of such a feast as the weaklings of to-day could neither provide nor consume, many of whose dishes are now

obsolete, and many more only to be thought of with a dyspeptic shudder, as for instance the two little roast pigs *couchant* in two big pewter platters at either end of the table, the one with an ear of corn in his mouth, the other with a big red apple. Between these were a mighty home-cured ham, a mountain of brawn, a pig's-head cheese, composed of the gelatinous portions of the pork, chopped fine, seasoned highly with spices and herbs, and then hardened in a shape of quivering jelly, ornamented with thin rings of beets and carrots, orange peel, and sprigs of parsley. Besides these adaptations of "the friend of man," there was a round of beef à-la-mode, and a pair of those tongues which our ancestors never failed to remind their guests "never told a lie;" then there were platters of hot "simballs," pies like the daisies in a June meadow, a stalwart cheese, short-cakes, buttered toast, and lighter matters without count. Around this abundant board the guests were seated in relays, the older and more honorable having the first places, and among these Mrs. Samson soon found a chair, while the hostess, leading her younger guest to a group of merry girls, plucked the prettiest by the sleeve, saying: —

"Here, Hetty, this is a young gentleman who is going to fight the British for us — Mr. Robert Shurtliffe, a cousin of Captain Samson's. Make much of him, and see that he gets some supper. My daughter Hetty, Mr. Shurtliffe."

Thus launched, we may be sure that our handsome recruit responded to the challenge, and made himself amazingly popular with the girls, while the young men soon regarded him with scowling envy.

The last detachment of the young people was still

at supper, when from the "fore-room" arose the wail of a violin, the guttural complaint of a bass-viol, and the sharp remonstrance of a pitch-pipe, to which, after many efforts, the stringed instruments adapted themselves, and the whole sounded a chord of satisfied harmony.

"Parson Robbins has come, and had his supper, and now the sing is beginning, Robert Shurtliffe," announced pretty Hetty to her guest. "Had you rather go in and listen, or stay here, and when we've cleared away the tables play Forfeits, and Pope Joan, and Ring-around-a-Rosy, and *may be* Kiss-in-the-Ring?"

"I'd rather play Kiss-in-the-Ring with you, Miss Hetty, than do anything else I can think of," replied the sailor, and black-eyed Sally Dunham exclaimed:—

"There, you've got your answer now, Hetty, and I hope you're satisfied."

"You're not satisfied because he didn't say you," cried Sally's brother, with a loud guffaw, and, thus artlessly expressing the very same passions and sentiments which are more or less artfully concealed in the politest circles of to-day, those young people enjoyed themselves mightily, and felt that the world and its history began and ended in their own experience.

Deborah Samson, ensconced in the darkest corner of the fore-room, and almost hidden by the portly figure of Mrs. Betsey Crombie in a big armchair, allowed herself the rare indulgence of self-surrender to emotion, and closing her eyes pictured a great vessel plunging on through the darkness into unknown spaces, the hissing brine thrown into angry furrows by her sharp prow, and a foaming wake stretching behind, back, back even to Plymouth Harbor, a bridge whereon true

hearts might send messages of faithful love across leagues of silent sea. The pungent smell of the making tide came floating in at the open windows, and the sound of the surf upon "the back o' the beach" smote in grand diapason through the stringed harmony of the instruments. Deborah closed her eyes, and from beneath the lids great tears welled out, and ran unheeded down her cheeks. Not three such hours came to that long life of activity, struggle, and aggressive warfare, but when they came, they made an impression beneath which Laura Matilda, weeping daily over her rose-water novel, would be crushed into nothingness.

"Oh, shepherds, have you seen
My Flo-oh-ra pah-ah-as this way?"

inquired the choristers in mellow and well-tuned voices of the audience, and then the summons to follow the

"Merrymerrymerry mer-er-ery horn"

was sounded loud and long, and then came a new song of Dibdin's, with a chorus to which the parson did not disdain to add his own harmonious and well-trained voice. And then, breaking upon the sweet reverie of the sailor's wife, came a grand burst of concerted melody, the fugue for which she had made petition of Jesse Churchill before hiding herself.

"The Lord descended from above"

chanted the four men's voices in perfect harmony; and then the sweet tenor alone told how —

"On cherub and on cherubim,
On cher-r-rub and on cher-r-rubim,
Full royally He rode;"

and then the basso declared —

"And on the wings of mighty winds
Came flying fly-igh-ing all abroad."

And now came in the fugue, where every part caught up the melody, toyed with it, flung it to another, chased each the other like lambs at play, insisted each upon its own independence, yet in the end embraced each other in loving accord and finished with a grand burst of concerted harmony that rolled out triumphantly to crown old ocean's *Benedicite omnia opera Domini*, and the night wind, and the soft breath of flowers, and the song of the stars in their courses, that Music of the Spheres, which Stanleys of the world of science tell us undoubtedly surrounds us, but which our senses are too limited to apprehend.

So glorious and stirring were the last notes that Deborah roused herself, and peeping out from behind her screen printed upon her memory a picture that always recurred with the deeper sentiments of the scene. The musicians were grouped in a corner, the violin standing and reading his music from a desk, while the bass viol, crouched behind him, appeared like a familiar spirit, inspiring the basis of the melody by unseen means. A group of candles upon a little shelf flickered and guttered in the night wind, and cast their fitful light upon the silvery heads of two old men seated close together and holding between them one of those short wide volumes of sacred melody, then newly in fashion and now nearly forgotten. They were called psalm-books rather than hymnals, because it was still considered profane to sing other than the sacred songs of David and the other psalmists in divine worship, and it was only after years of struggle that Parson Robbins, himself a musician, had persuaded his people to "condescend" either to Watts, or Tate and Brady, which collection the parson himself liked best.

The other and younger choristers stood, each keeping a corner of his eye upon Churchill, who, pitch-pipe in hand, beat time, occasionally ringing the resonant steel against the edge of the music-desk. In front of this group, in the chair of state, sat Parson Robbins, comely and stately, dressed in a new suit of clerical black, a voluminous neckerchief of finest linen cambric, and a full-bottomed wig, whose powdered curls well set off his fresh color, handsome mouth, and mellow dark eyes. He too beat time, but only with one shapely finger of a remarkably well-kept hand, which fell quite noiselessly upon the silken-hosed and well-turned leg crossed above the other.

“Good, good!” cried he, as the last notes floated out of the window, and the thrill of silenced strings vibrated faintly for an instant, then attenuated into silence. “I could find it in my heart to wish such a glorious psalm of praise might so be sung in meeting on the Lord’s Day, but perhaps it would savor too much of carnal enjoyment.”

“I don’t know about that, Parson,” boldly replied Jesse Churchill, called by his friends Apostle Jesse, because he never doubted his own ability to preach and to exhort, to admonish and to upbraid, — qualities valuable in their place, but so ill placed in this instance that some years later it became the parson’s painful duty to excommunicate Apostle Jesse, and declare him anathema maranatha in the most approved fashion.

In the present instance, dreading perhaps one of the discussions wherein the apostle delighted, and which his pastor abhorred, the latter, blandly and vaguely smiling, interrupted its preamble with —

“Oh, Brother Churchill, have you yet practiced that

noble anthem of Mr. Handel's of which I spoke to you?"

"Yes, Parson, we propose to try it now. We have studied it considerable and, I think, can do it good justice," replied Churchill, the ambition of the musician conquering that of the orator. And so "the sing" went on, until the parson, rising, gave the signal for the withdrawal of the older and "professing" portion of the company, while from the great kitchen arose the joyous squeak of Dauphin's and Prince's fiddles, hitherto restrained in deference to the more dignified music of the fore-room.

"Don't carry off your cousin, Deborah," said the hostess as the latter made her adieux. "He's just beginning his good time, and we were young once ourselves. They'll keep it up till daylight, and then some of the boys will show him the way to your house, unless he'll stop to breakfast."

"That'll suit him, no doubt," replied Deborah, with a rather weary smile, "and I'll go home with the Howlands and Hammatts. Good-night; I'm real glad I came, for I've had a beautiful time."

And the protestation was more sincere than is sometimes made on similar occasions.

CHAPTER XLII.

ROBERT SHURTLIFFE.

EARLY the next morning, but yet not so early that Deborah Samson had not etched a good many little marks into her life's work, Robert Shurtliffe, hardly the worse for a sleepless night, appeared at the house in Middle Street, and was presented to Lydia and Debbie and the little ones, a noisy and vigorous group, few of whom were destined to reach maturity, for in the "good old times" infant and childish mortality was really terrible, and had not our fathers been blessed with prodigious families the Anglo-Saxon population of this country would have been exterminated even sooner than now appears likely. Deborah was a notable house-keeper, and her daughters were trained in the same good fashion. Morning naps were anathema in that household, and if one was attempted by the young folk, even after a night of revelry, the housemother's broom-handle was heard clattering on the stairs, while her vigorous voice shouted up : —

"Come, girls, come! Time enough for sleeping in the grave! Get up now!"

Another incitement to activity often used by her was more according to the frankness of that day than the reticence of this.

"Never 'll get a husband unless you're smart," she would say, "not even if you stood a-top the house and hollered ' Fire,' to draw the men together."

But after the noonday dinner was eaten and cleared away, and the girls had gone to dress for the afternoon, the mistress of the house led her guest into the little-used front parlor, and carefully closing the door, motioned him to a seat.

"I have something to say to you in private, my lad," began she, drawing a chair close in front of him; "I've thought out your name. Jonathan Samson left two boys and a girl, and the oldest boy was named Robert Shurtliffe Samson, so that was the name I gave you last night, but when I thought of it more, I remembered that boy had blue eyes and reddish hair, and your eyes are hazel and your hair almost black, so you're not he, though you mean to pass for him. Nor you're not Ephraim, for he'd be younger. Now tell me just who you are."

"I'm Simeon Samson's cousin, and under his roof. Is n't that enough?"

"Enough to make me treat you as well as I know how, and to keep you as long as you'll stay, but not enough to tell me whether I'd best put you to sleep in the girls' room or the boys' to-night."

"You mean to say" —

"There, there, sit down, my dear, and keep all those vamping airs for the British, if you ever meet them. I strongly suspect you're that very Deborah Samson who, after the battle of Bunker Hill, wrote to my husband and wanted to go sailing with him to fight for her country. She was sixteen or so then, and now she'd be about twenty, and I strongly suspicion she stands before me now."

"Well, you won't betray me, cousin Deborah," replied the other, coolly; "and of all people in the world I think

I'd soonest confess the truth to you, for right well can I see that you would do the very same thing yourself if you were placed where I am."

"You think so? It may be you're right, child, and yet I'd be loath to see my Lyddy in coat and breeches."

"Lyddy has a father and a mother and a good home and a sweetheart, and I have none of them," said the girl, bitterly. "And something in my heart would not let me rest quiet feeding pigs and poultry, and churning, washing, and spinning, while my country called aloud to her children for help against the tyrant of England. Ever since I heard the cannon at Bunker Hill, and read of the glorious stand my brethren made there, and the death of Joseph Warren, and the ride of Paul Revere, and the noble deeds of young fellows no stronger and no braver than I, my heart has been resolved; and at last, when I read my cousin Simeon's glorious fight with Dawson, and of his successes since, I made up my mind I'd sail under him, and have my share of the glory, and had I but been six hours earlier in Plymouth, you never would have known that Robert Shurtliffe is no more than poor Deb Samson, the kitchen wench."

"Nay, then, lass, 't is better I should have been the one to find it out than the sailors aboard the Mars," replied the older woman, gravely. "But come now, child, for you're hardly older than my Lyddy, tell me the whole story and what you've done and what you mean to do, and if I can find it in my conscience to help you, I'll do it. But be honest, my lass, be honest, or I'll have naught to do with you."

"Well, then, cousin Deborah, I'll make a clean breast of it, and as for being honest, I've no skill nor experience in lying, for that's coward's work, and if I was a

coward I'd not be here. Ever since I wrote cousin Simeon, just after Bunker Hill, I've had my mind made up, but I could n't do anything until I'd served out my time there in Middleboro'; for you know I was bound out to Deacon Thomas until I was eighteen. They were kind enough to me, but they did n't understand me or I them, and I always felt like a sea-gull the boys trapped and took off a joint of his wing and kept him in the barnyard. How I pitied that poor bird! Pitied him so much that one day I wrung his neck and threw him to the pigs. If I could n't have got away I should have wanted some one to wring my neck. But after I was eighteen and had my time, I taught school two winters, and worked summers for wages, and so got together a little money. Then this last winter I bought the wool, and spun and dyed and wove the cloth these clothes are made of, and I flatter myself 't is a good enough piece of work."

"Why, yes, 't is as handsome cloth as one would wish to see," replied Deborah, examining the texture and evenness of the fabric. "But how did you get them made?"

"Well, I said that Robert Shurtliffe, a relation of mine, was going to enlist" —

"I thought you did n't know how to lie," dryly interposed Deborah.

"It was no lie, for I had already in my own mind borrowed my brother's name, and is n't he a relation of mine?"

"Well — it's whipping the devil round the stump, if it is n't a lie, but go on."

"I told the tailor what I say, and I gave him the measures for Robert Shurtliffe, and he made the coat,"

continued the girl, rather defiantly, "and for the waistcoat and the breeches I stole the patterns from a tailor-ess that was working in the house, and when I had cut out the clothes and put back the patterns, I carried my work up on the hill where I stood to hear the cannon of Bunker Hill, and there I made them up, singing Yankee Doodle all the time, and stabbing a Britisher every time I put my needle through the cloth. Then a week or ten days ago I quietly put on my clothes, slipped out of the window before anybody was stirring, and after wandering about a little to try my new clothes, I came down here to ship aboard the Mars."

"And now what will you do, lass?"

"Go to Boston in the packet to-morrow morning and ship for a sailor, or enlist for a soldier as soon as may be."

"Well, if you're bound to carry it out, and I won't say but you're right to follow your nature and work off some of the sea-gull in your blood, — if you're bound to make trial of yourself in this way, my advice is to 'list as a soldier. You're not thrown with your comrades as you'd be aboard ship, where, in a crowded fo'cas'l, you could hardly keep your sex a secret; and another thing, if you're found out, or wounded, or get sick of it, while you're ashore, you've only to say, 'I'm a woman,' or at worst to run away from manhood as you did from womanhood, to get out of the adventure in a moment, while at sea it might be months before you could come by a smock and petticoat. The more I think on 't, Deborah, the less I like it, and the more I'd hate to see Lyddy in your place, but since you're set on doing it, and are of age, and in no way bound to be said by me" —

“Come, now, cousin Deborah, you’re going back on what you allowed but now about the sea-gull blood and all. You might show a little kindness to a motherless girl, for your own girl’s sake.”

“Nay, Deb, if you take it that way — if you come to me as a motherless girl of my husband’s kin, I speak to you very different. Go away for a few days, and come back dressed as a modest maid, and I’ll give you a home and a welcome, and be a mother to you, and keep you till some good man takes you to wife” —

“I want no good man taking me to wife, and I want no petticoat, nor apron, nor dish-clout, nor to be tied by the leg in a barnyard! I’ve borne it all this twenty year, and I’ll have no more of it. But thank you, cousin, for your kindly offer, thank you heartily.”

“You’re welcome to the offer, and ’t was an honest one, but I’d as lief you did n’t take up with it after all. I don’t well know how to care for sea-gulls, and my own chicks are wild enough without such teaching.”

“But we’re friends, cousin. Sure you won’t take back the kindness you’ve showed.”

And the strange girl caught the matron by both shoulders, and stooping from her lofty height, looked wistfully into the other’s eyes while tears gathered in her own.

“There, now, child! You’ve put on the hosen, but you have n’t put on the nature of a man. You must have some one to bid you have your own way, though you’d never give it up if they bid you. You must be a rebel to womanhood, and yet you must be loved and petted because you are a woman. Nay, I’ll put you to sleep neither with the girls nor the boys, for you’ve the nature of neither, because you’ve the nature of both.

You shall sleep on the kitchen floor, and to-morrow you shall go ; but here 's a kiss for you, poor girl, and a prayer that God will protect you from all evil and from your own silly self."

So the next morning Robert Shurtliffe went up to Boston in the packet, carrying with him a store of Captain Samson's linen, and five dollars in money, besides the hearty parting kiss of the captain's wife and daughters.

William Goodwin was very jealous of the tender farewell the young recruit took of pretty Lydia, but she did not know of the explanation that would have proved the antidote to such jealousy, nor could she understand her mother's amusement thereat.

CHAPTER XLIII.

HORATIO NELSON AND LUCY HAMMATT.

ANATOMISTS tell us that the more highly developed the organism of the living creature, the greater the capacity for pain; and the scale of sensation ranges from the protoplasm we call jelly-fish up to the refined, sensitive, and introspective woman, who possesses probably the most highly developed capacity for pain to be found upon this globe.

Lucy Howland Hammatt was a woman of this order, and she had lost her husband, and her place as head of his house, and nearly all the little fortune he and her father had left her, and she was not happy. It will be remembered that she was the mother of three children: Abraham, married to Priscilla LeBaron; William, married to Hepzibah Barker of Nantucket, whither he had gone to live; and Lucy, as yet unmarried, chiefly because she was so requiring, so sarcastic, and so haughty, that the young men were afraid of her. She it was, who, when Abraham, almost ruined by the collapse of the Continental currency, and by bad debts incurred in the war famine, came home one night discouraged, gloomy, and silent, save for a few words about the poorhouse and beggary, bitterly told her mother in the seclusion of her own bedroom that Abraham was groaning under the burden of their maintenance and hinting at their departure; and finally persuaded the grieved and sensitive

woman to write and offer a visit to her son William, who, with his rich wife and lucrative oil-business, was exceeding well to do, and had often urged his mother and sister to come and make their home with him.

"And William is coming to Plymouth next week, and will take us with him," continued Lucy, eagerly, "so don't say a word to Abr'am or Priscilla until we are all ready to go and my brother is here, and then tell Abr'am before William that you are going to relieve him of one burden, at least."

"No, no, Lucy, I sha'n't do it that way," replied the mother, promptly; "one son is just as dear to me as the other, and I would no more hurt Abr'am's feelings than I would Willy's. I shall tell them that we've concluded to accept some of Hepsey's cordial invitations and make a little visit at Nantucket; then we'll just leave the rest to shape itself as it will. It's not poor Abr'am's fault if he's unfortunate, and Priscilla's been a good daughter to me. And then — your father's waiting for me, up on Burying Hill."

And the widow hastily went away to her own room. A little later, the mother-heart, large and warm in her, led her downstairs again to the sitting-room, where she found her son standing over a portable mahogany desk which he had placed upon the table and opened; now, with his hands in his pockets and his lips drawn to something between a rueful smile and a noiseless whistle, he stood regarding the parcels of banknotes neatly ranged side by side, and filling the entire desk. It was his wife's dowry, paid by her father's administrator in Continental currency, still legal tender, but so deteriorated as to be worth little more than the paper it was printed on.

"It was a scurvy trick, a scurvy trick, to make me take it," Abraham was saying as his mother entered the room, and Priscilla, without raising her eyes from her knitting, replied in a voice of quiet sarcasm : —

"We children each used to have a hen and sell the eggs to the house, but my hen never laid anything and brother Billy's always laid two a day."

Quietly drawing back, the mother closed the door, and went softly upstairs again, sorry that she had heard what Priscilla did not mean to say before her. And the consciousness made her yet more desolate than she was before.

The next day she gently made known her plan of returning to Nantucket with her son William and making a considerable visit to him and his wife, who had urgently invited her and Lucy to do so.

Abraham, with that singular want of perception in matters of sentiment characterizing strong-natured, honest, and busy men, cheerfully indorsed the idea, thought and said that it would be a pleasant change for his mother, and completed the measure of his offenses by saying, with a slap on Lucy's shoulder : "And mayhap, Lu, you'll pick up a husband among those rich whalers."

"And so ease you of my support," replied Lucy, bursting into a cold and bitter little storm of tears and running out of the room.

"Why, what under the sun !" — began her brother in astonishment, but behold, his mother had followed her daughter, and Priscilla, laughing in such a fashion that one wondered if it was not an unsuccessful attempt at crying, came and put her arms around his neck and her face on his shoulder, while she sobbed : —

"You poor stupid darling! It was the very, *very* last thing you should have said. Every bit of the fat's in the fire now, and you must just wait till it's burnt up. Then we can make a fresh start."

"Well, thank the Lord that *you're* all right, Pris," replied her husband, with a groan, as he clasped his wife tighter with one arm, and with the other hand wiped his perplexed and moist forehead.

"Yes, dear, I'm all right now, because I have you, and I'm young, and it's I that order the house in my own fashion; but, Abe, darling, if the time should come that I must live with our Willy's wife, or any of the rest of them, I don't doubt I shall feel just as mother does now. It's human nature, Abe, and women are very much alike after all."

"Is it? — but I don't see why they need feel so," murmured Abraham in masculine bewilderment, but Priscilla kissed him again, and his brow cleared.

William came in April, and in July Abraham wrote his mother a letter which, after more than a century, is so fresh in its manly tenderness and honesty that it does one good to read it.

PLYMOUTH, 20th *July* 1782.

DEAR MAMA, — I am surprised & disappointed to find by Lucy's gloomy Epistle that you continue at Nantucket yet, without having even fix'd the time for coming off.

We had all flatter'd ourselves that we should have seen you here before this time; — remember D^r Madam that winter approaches & Signify to the Squire your pleasure to return, who promis'd when he took you from us, that he would return you as soon as you was

willing ; if he cant come with you, it is better to come with somebody else, than to wait even one fortnight.

Mrs. Thomas is the paler for y^r absence, & Aunt Betty¹ will be sick if you dont prevent it by coming home.

My wife and your little grand-daughter long to see you, others of your friends sincerely wish your return, and I do assure you there is no event within the compass of my expectation that I anticipate with half the pleasure.

I've the pleasure to inform you, that my Business increases ; I have two Apprentices who are both Spinners, four Tons of Hemp in my Loft, a prospect of more for the Winter & as much work as I can do in the Spring, so that I begin sometimes to expect better Days, & to see myself once more in easy circumstances, which I shall never consider myself as being in untill my Mama & Sister enjoy ease and Independence. Tell Lucy this, and persuade her to believe it ; tell her that I Love her heartily, that so far from its being a burthen, one of the first pleasures if not the very first that I promise myself from being in Business, is that I shall be able to contribute to her Ease & Happiness. I should have written her, but really have not Time, having wrote many Letters before this. I must now conclude & we shall all expect to see you both soon, and all join in Love to all of you.

From your affectionate son,

A. HAMMATT.

I suppose no mother ever lived who could have hardened herself against the sweetness, the strength, and the

¹ Two of Madam Hammatt's sisters.

honesty of such an appeal, and some two weeks after its receipt Madam Hammatt, resisting both the tender entreaties of her son William and the more acid suggestions of her daughter Lucy, who found herself rather amused with the opportunity of refusing a good deal of solid, if oleaginous wealth, took passage in the schooner *Harmony*, owned in Plymouth by Captain Thomas Davis, and commanded by Captain Nathaniel Carver, of that town.

The voyage was prosperous and promised to be short, when one morning between the *Harmony* and the rising sun arose the stately masts of a frigate, which presently, running the Union Jack to her mast-head, fired a gun across the bows of the schooner, at the same time making a graceful sweep that brought her up into the wind, while through his glass Captain Carver could make out hands already lowering one of the taut boats swinging from their davits on either quarter of the frigate.

“No use to try either to fight or run, since for fighting I’ve only my fists, and for running, sails big enough for a patch on his fo’s’l,” slowly remarked the Plymouth man, shutting up his old spy-glass, and setting his hat on the back of his head. “Might as well lay to, Washburn. I hope he’ll be civil to the women.”

“I’ll pity him if he comes to close quarters with the gal; she’d scratch his eyes out ’fore you’d say ‘knife,’” replied Washburn, who had tried to make himself agreeable to Miss Lucy.

In another half hour the crew of the launch had taken quiet possession of the *Harmony*, and the captain with his papers was about obeying the command of his captors, and presenting himself on board the frigate, when he stopped to say to the officer in command:—

"There 's an old lady and her daughter in the cabin, passengers for Plymouth. They are some of our most respectable people, and I hope you won't let any of your men speak sa'cy or the like of that to them, and that your cap'n will set them ashore safe, whatever he 's bound to do with the rest of us."

"Make yourself easy, Captain," replied the royal lieutenant, graciously. "We don't fight women, and I don't doubt Captain Nelson will see that they are set ashore as soon as possible."

"Nelson is his name?"

"Yes. Lieutenant-Commander Horatio Nelson, at present master of His Majesty's frigate *Albemarle*. We are exploring the naval capacities of your coast, Master Carver, and find it more picturesque than navigable. I suppose you are familiar with this part of it."

"I'd ought to be, having sailed these waters, boy and man, for thirty years or more," growled Carver, vaguely resenting the light badinage of the other's tone.

"Just the man we want," replied the lieutenant, as the launch grazed the frigate's side. "Will you step on deck, Master Carver?"

Silently obeying, the prisoner found himself confronted by the slight but noble figure and the commanding regard of one of the foremost heroes of the world's history; the man who fought so well the battles of a great nation, giving his life for her glory, and who, in his dying words, "Kiss me, Hardy!" showed at once the strength and the weakness of his nature.

But as yet the glory and the shame were hidden in the breast of the future, and the lieutenant-commander dreamed not of Lord Nelson's fame.

One glance of those penetrating eyes showed to this

born leader of men the honesty and simplicity of his captive, and it was with something warmer than civility that he led him down into his cabin, ordered refreshments set before him, and then, with map and chart, questioned him closely as to the lay of the coast.

“ Well, it ’s pretty intricate, is n’t it ? ” declared he at last. “ And I ’m afraid, Captain, I shall have to take your pretty little schooner as a tender, and keep you on board for a while as pilot. I am sorry to have to remind you of the fate of pilots attempting treachery under such circumstances.”

Captain Carver meditated for a moment, turned the quid in his cheek, thrust his hands in his pockets and his heels as far as they would stretch out upon the polished floor, and finally with the ruddy color perceptibly ebbing away from beneath the bronze of his cheek, he quietly said : —

“ If you ’re going to ask me to pilot you into Plymouth Harbor, with a view to attackting the town, Commander, you may as well string me up to your yard-arm first as last, for I won’t do it. But if all you want is to cruise up and down the coast, go and set on Cohasset rocks by moonlight, try to get into Provincetown without scraping a shoal, or the like of that, why, if it ’s pilot you or hang, I ’d rather pilot you ; and if I say I ’ll do it, I ’ll do it honest, for that ’s the way we Plymouth boys are brought up by our mammys.”

“ Shake hands on it, Captain, shake hands,” said Nelson. “ And when I ’m looking for a Benedict Arnold I sha’n’t go to Plymouth for him.”

“ Better not, Captain, for if you did you might catch a Tartar. Our folks have got kind o’ erritable in these days, and don’t like jokes on sore subjects.”

"You're right, Carver, you're right, man, and I'm wrong," said Nelson, stretching out his hand, which the other placably enfolded in a mighty grasp, while he continued in the same even tone:—

"There's one thing more, Captain. I've got a couple of passengers aboard, gentlewomen, bound for Plymouth where they belong. One of them is elderly and the other not so young as she once was. You'll set them ashore?"

"Certainly. We'll stand as far into Plymouth Harbor as you find safe, and then your crew shall take the ladies with their luggage and the men's kits ashore in the schooner's two boats. I suppose you can stand in far enough to make it safe both for the frigate and the boats, eh?"

"Lord, yes, on a flood tide and a fair wind it's safe for a boat anywhere inside o' Manomet."

And thus it came about that on the 12th of August, 1782, Madam Hammatt and her daughter Lucy with all their bandboxes were set ashore on Davis' wharf, to the great admiration and excitement of their town-folk, who crowded down to welcome and question them.

A week or so later, Captain Nathaniel Carver himself strolled into town by way of the Beach, at the back of which he had been set ashore in the early morning.

So rose-colored was his report to his owner of his treatment while on board of the *Albemarle*, and of Captain Nelson's manners and feelings toward the Americans, that Captain Davis, too good a business man to relinquish his property even to the king, without an effort to retain it, took counsel with himself and his friends, and while the *Albemarle* still cruised in the offing as though loath to leave so fair a neighborhood, he borrowed a big

boat, hastily loaded it with fresh meat, poultry, vegetables, and fruit, and, accompanied by Captain Carver, put boldly out, past the Beach, past Saquish and the Gurnet, and standing over toward Manomet ran across the fore-foot of the frigate which, as if astonished at his audacity, swooped easily down upon him, and with her tower of snow-white canvas fluttering in the wind, lay to, with an interrogation mark at each yardarm.

"We're in for it now, Carver," said Captain Davis, softly, as the former deftly laid the boat alongside the Albemarle, "and either we'll carry the Harmony home with us, or Discord will carry us to Dartmoor."

"Nothing venture, nothing have," growled Nathaniel Carver, and the two men mounted the ladder thrown over for their accommodation. On the deck stood Nelson, who, with courteous smile and ready hand, welcomed his late prisoner and his owner, who after a few words of greeting made known his errand in the manly and straightforward fashion sure to gain the approbation of a man like Nelson.

Not immediately answering his petition, however, the commander invited his guests to the cabin, where the steward presently laid a collation of such dried dainties as his larder afforded, the host remarking with a smile as he pressed one dish and another upon his guests, —

"For once I must be excused, gentlemen, from the duties of a host, and not offer you the best I have, merely informing you that some hampers of delicious fruit and vegetables have just come aboard, but as they are the gift of a friend I do not feel that I may part with them."

"Not another word, Commander," replied Davis, helping himself to some dried fruit. "I'd far rather have your figs than your grape-shot."

“Good ! But you won’t refuse the juice of the grape, I trust,” replied Nelson, offering a bottle of port, not yet a traditional beverage. And so a pleasant hour passed by, and at the end Nelson received a private report from the officer of the watch, and inviting his guests on deck, pointed to the schooner which had been brought alongside, remarking good-humoredly, —

“And now, gentlemen, that we may part in perfect Harmony, allow me to restore the schooner, and present you with this certificate of release.”

Perhaps one should apologize for presenting the hero of Trafalgar in the guise of a punster, but puns as well as port were still in fashion, and indulgence in the one naturally led to the other. The certificate, still extant, runs as follows : —

These are to certify that I took the schooner Harmony, Nathaniel Carver, Master, belonging to Plymouth ; but on account of his good services, have given him up his vessel again.

Dated on board His Majesty’s ship Albemarle, 17th August, 1782, in Boston Bay.

HORATIO NELSON.

“Massachusetts Bay is n’t Boston Harbor,” remarked Captain Thomas Davis as he folded up the certificate and put it in his pocket, “but there was no mistake about Nelson’s port, eh, Carver ?”

And Carver, who did not perceive the play upon words, answered dryly : —

“The only mistake, to my mind, was that it wasn’t Santa Cruz rum.”

CHAPTER XLIV.

MOTHER CREWE'S LAST CURSE.

DEBORAH SAMSON has said that the Howlands were fond of land, and the old records prove her judgment just. Travel southward by Watson's Hill and Jabez' Corner toward Manomet, or northward by Rocky Nook toward Kingston, or wander hither and thither in the old town looking up the title-deeds of men's estates, and everywhere you come upon the name of Howland, with John, Joseph, Thomas, Consider, or Thomas Southworth, as a prefix. They loved land, and they owned a great deal, first and last, but in the end lost all except the six feet apportioned to every one of them on Burying Hill. Naturally with the love of land came the love of primogeniture, and before the Revolution, this, being English law, was the law of English Colonies, if any man cared to put it in practice. There is a tradition that Pilgrim John, although glad to come to the New World as squire to Governor Carver, was a cadet of the noble house since united with that of Bedford, whose duke still enumerates Baron Howland among his other titles. The tradition may, or may not, be well founded, but if true, explains in a degree this eminently patrician fancy for the rights of primogeniture, and excuses somewhat Consider Howland's tyranny in seizing under the law of entail poor Jedediah Samson's little farm and homestead.

S'uth'ard Howland inherited, along with much land, the passion for entail, primogeniture, and the rest, and as the Revolution drew near its close, and it became evident to all men that the reign of democracy, equal rights, and primitive justice was to rule in the embryo Republic, S'uth'ard began to look up the outlying nooks and corners of his estates, with a view to consolidating his titles in case they were to be questioned.

One of these outlying nooks was a piece of woodland, some ten acres in extent, upon the Carver road, and after studying the deed which had given it to his grandfather, with a good deal more land, since disposed of, S'uth'ard one day rode out to view it, and arrange for its being staked off and fenced. The land was where he expected to find it, but nearly in the centre stood a dilapidated and squalid cabin, with a thread of peaty smoke curling out of its lath-and-plaster chimney.

"What 's this ! Who 's trespassing on my property ?" demanded S'uth'ard, angrily, of his companion, one Henchman, who combined the duties of bailiff, surveyor, amateur attorney, and confidential adviser to several of the landed proprietors of Plymouth, Howland among the rest. He was a useful little man in his way, but neither dignified nor comely, possessing a mean figure, red hair, squinting green eyes, and a squeaky false voice which he tried to make ingratiating, but only made repulsive.

"Why, this is the residence of Madam Crewe, Squire," replied he now, with a sniggering laugh. "Witch Crewe, they call her commonly ; she has resided here for some years, and I believe had this mansion erected" —

"Stop your fooling, and tell me how it is I did not know she was still here ?" demanded S'uth'ard, the veins

in his throat swelling, and the purplish flush that marked his wrath mounting to his forehead.

"Well, Squire, I must say it's a little unreasonable to make me accountable for your not knowing anything," replied Henchman, his own face turning green, which was his way of showing righteous indignation.

Howland glared at him for a moment, but perhaps considering that it was better to turn his wrath into a more effective channel, he rode up to the door of the cabin, and with his whip-handle beat a summons, immediately answered, for the door flew open, and upon the threshold appeared the bent and decrepit figure of mother Crewe, leaning upon her staff, and with Milcom perched upon her shoulder. Great age had reduced the old woman's flesh to the color and consistence of parchment, clinging to the bones of face and neck and hands much in the grewsome fashion of a mummy, while from the deep caverns, whither they had retreated, her eyes gleamed with malevolent energy, and her toothless jaws, silently working as she gazed upon her visitor, seemed, as they had years before, to be chewing the curses they would presently emit.

"Well, man of violence and wrath, what do you want here?" demanded she, at length. Her voice broke the spell of perplexity and awe that had arrested Howland's mood, as the wind from hidden icebergs will sometimes chill and check the boiling blood.

"What do *I* want!" demanded he. "I fancy the question is, what do you want on another man's property? Do you know this is my land, woman, and that you have no more right to put up a house here than you have to come and sit by my fireside?"

"Your fireside will soon be desolate, S'uth'ard How-

land, soon, soon! The shadow is almost even with your lips, and it rises, — rises fast.”

“None of your witch-talk to me, woman,” replied Howland, involuntarily raising his hand to his face, and seeming to brush away something. “I’m not to be frightened out of my rights in that way, I can promise you. I tell you again this land is mine, and I am going to fence it, and — may be cultivate it. At any rate, I don’t want a tenant on it, and you ’ll have to vacate, and that at once. This day week, the plough will be running over the spot you stand on. You understand, do you, mother Crewe?”

“This day week, this day week, man of violence and wrath, they will dig your grave on Burying Hill. I see it, I hear it, I smell the fresh earth they throw out. Go, poor wretch, go make your peace, and set your house in order; this day week, yes — the shadow rises, rises to your lips, — go!”

She stretched out her claw-like hand, she raised her glittering eyes, and a strange shudder shook her frame from head to foot, while Milcom, standing upon her shoulder, his legs and tail stiffened like iron, and his green eyes ablaze, uttered a long wail of demoniac meaning.

Terror, shame, superstition, and a thwarted will are powerful factors to work in a haughty and uncontrolled nature, and as they rose tumultuously in S’uth’ard Howland’s blood they heated it to such a point that the man lost all control of himself; and lifting his clenched hand above his head he swore a terrible, a blasphemous oath, that before the next day’s sun should set, his land should be rid of this insolent intruder, her hovel should be leveled with the dust, and she herself, if she could

be found, burnt as a witch, or driven from the town at the cart's tail.

Mother Crewe listened, and ever as she listened laid her ear to Milcom's mouth as if from his wailings she gained counsel; but when at last, choked with his own rage, and foaming at the mouth, Howland gasped into silence, the hag raised her bent form with a power none could have imagined remained in its sinews, and with glazed eyes seemed to look upon some scene pictured in the green gloom of the forest before her. Then slowly pointing, slowly tracing the outline of what she saw with a skinny finger, she said:—

“Carry him home—the gate will do—come wife—come sister—children—scream, cover your eyes—die, poor maid, broken by the curse on Ansel Ring—killed by the curse on S'uth'ard Howland—die, poor maid, for the sins of others”—

But at this moment, Howland, with a sort of scream of rage, uplifted his hand and tried to force his horse nearer to the door, for what purpose no one need to guess, for it was never accomplished, the horse rearing and plunging in such fashion that the rider's attention and wrath were presently absorbed by him, and before the contest was finished Mother Crewe had disappeared and the door was closed.

“Come away, Squire, come away!” exclaimed Henchman, his green-hued cheeks and chattering teeth betraying a very real and absorbing terror. “There's no credit and no profit in fighting witches. Come away and let her alone, she can't live long, and she can't hurt the land”—

“Hold your tongue, Henchman! Here, hold on! Here's a writ I got ready before I came,—a writ of

ejectment — here, go you, since this cursed brute won't let me, go you and serve it on her, and tell her that at noon to-morrow I shall be here to take possession, with men enough to do my bidding, and that by one hour after noon both she and her cabin will be gone. Tell her that, HENCHMAN, and if she won't open her door, make her hear it through her door, but see that she gets the writ. I'll ride on and cool my blood a little."

"That's the best thing you can do," replied HENCHMAN, a good deal relieved; and when he overtook his employer just at the Pilgrim Spring at the foot of Spring Lane, he reported, cheerfully, "I could n't get the old lady to open the door, but I bawled my message in at the crack, and shoved the writ under the door. I guess she'll make a moonlight flitting of it."

"Whatever she does, see that you, with a couple of strong laborers, are at the corner of the wood-road turning up to her hut at a little before noon to-morrow," said HOWLAND, sternly, and with a careless nod of farewell turned up the hill to the Town Square and so home to the pleasant old house where he had dwelt so many prosperous years.

"I was in hopes you'd give it up, Squire," said the bailiff in a low tone as the next day his employer drew rein at the spot where he on horseback with two stalwart fellows afoot rested in the shade of a clump of scrub-oaks, at the junction of the Carver road and the wood-path leading steeply up the hill and into the forest.

"I never give up anything," replied HOWLAND, taking off his three-cornered hat and wiping his crimson forehead.

"A mortal hot day," suggested HENCHMAN, lightly.

"That old witch will find it so, for I'll burn her

hovel over her head, if that's the only way to get her out of it. Come !”

And the lover of land rode on, his mouth set in a hard, straight line, his eyes red and gloomy, his face flushed darkly. It was indeed a hot day, of that stifling and breathless quality of heat which comes in late summer and early autumn, the dog-day heat so rife with disease and lassitude, the air filled with a sullen yellow haze that, so far from tempering the sun's rays, seemed to refract and intensify them to intolerable power, while not a breath of wind lent life to the solid strata of stifling woodland odors and the steam of the saturated masses of undergrowth.

“The bayberries smell like folks that's laid out,” remarked one of the workmen who, with axe on shoulder, plodded along after Henschman, who suddenly turned an angry face upon him and hissed out, to his great surprise, —

“Hold your tongue, you fool !”

But the Squire, riding silent and absorbed at the head of the little troop, heard nothing, or made no sign.

Arrived in the clearing, Henschman looked anxiously at the hut, hoping to see some sign of surrender and vacation, but the thin column of peat-smoke curled up as before, the door was close shut, and nothing had been moved or altered.

Closing his mouth still more rigidly Howland rode up to the door and struck it with his whip-handle, not now in the careless and impatient fashion of yesterday, but three solemn and menacing blows.

Again the door fell open at his summons, and upon the threshold stood mother Crewe, with Milcom on her shoulder. For a moment the two regarded each other

silently, and the thick yellow air seemed to shut down upon them like a pall.

"Well, woman! You have had your summons, and you are not gone," said Howland at length in a suppressed voice, whose every tone told of the wrath and determination kept down for the moment.

"My summons! 'Tis your summons that is in the air, man, and you will soon be gone. The shadow is at your lips, and with every breath you draw it in."

"Enough, enough of this fool's play!" burst out the man, his passion bursting bonds as the spring flood, lipping for a while at the barrier that seems to withstand it, suddenly raises its crest and with one wild cry of defiance sweeps away the strongest work of man as it would a child's toy dam.

"For God's sake, Squire, control yourself!" cried Henchman at last, even his feeble nature stirred to horror at the other's frenzy. "Here, we'll end it all! Men, pull the cabin down around the old witch's ears! You've warrant for it—here goes!" And seated as he was on horseback the lawyer sent his heel against the shutter securing the window-place and drove it in. The men silently obeyed both word and example, the one whirling his axe around his head and making a breach in the chimney, and the other attacking the roof.

Then the old witch once more raised herself to that terrible vigor of yesterday, — a supernatural vigor, as those who saw it felt and shuddered.

"Wait! Hold your hands, you hirelings, while I speak to your master! Man of violence, hear me. You have been warned, you have had a night for penitence, you had dreams—yes, I see them in your eyes now—well, in spite of them, in spite of all, you persist—you

rush on your own destruction — the shadow is darkening your brain and heart, but still you persist — oh, man — one word, before it is too late — speak ! ”

She raised her arm high above her head, the forefinger flickering like the tongue of a snake, and bursting with a fearful gasp the weight that seemed to paralyze his every power, Howland cried in a voice so hoarse and agonized as to be almost inarticulate : —

“Set fire to it! Burn it! Burn the witch and her house together!”

“Enough! The measure is filled up, running over!” cried mother Crewe in terrible exultation. “Man! I curse you living, I curse you dying, I curse you here, I curse you hereafter” — But why repeat the awful words at sound of which those strong men shuddered, and closing their ears retreated, leaving the curser and the cursed alone in that strange yellow light, that looked and felt like smouldering fire. Was it the woman or was it the cat that induced that final catastrophe, none can tell, but all at once, and when the foul flood of curses was at its height, Milcom sprang from his mistress’ shoulder to the flank of the irritable horse, already uneasy in the memory of yesterday’s struggle, and so drove him out of his senses that, with a wild cry and a bound of mortal terror, he broke from all control, and darting down the steep path was in a moment lost to sight.

They followed him as fast as they could, and had not far to follow, for at the sharp turn where the woodpath joined the road, where they had waited for him a brief half hour before, they came upon S’uth’ard Howland lying beneath the scrub-oaks, like a man wearied with the heat of the day and turned aside to seek repose for a little.

The lawyer knelt down, looked at the eyes, laid a hand upon the heart, held a hair before the parted lips ; then he rose with a white, scared face, and turned to his men.

“ We can't put him on a horse. Go find a gate — she said a gate ” —

“ There 's a gate down here a piece into the doctor's woodlot,” said one man, edging toward the road.

“ Go and get it, and mind you come back with it. No, stop, you 'd run away ; I 'll go with you — come on ! ”

And so the dead man lay there alone in the strange yellow light, when down the road hobbled mother Crewe, her cat gliding beside her, her staff in her hand. Beside the dead man she paused a little moment, looking fixedly at his face, angry in its rigidity but with a ghastly yellow stealing over the purple flush of brow and cheeks.

“ Ay, ay, it had to be, man, it had to be, and we shall meet before this time to-morrow. Better for you than me then, perhaps, but what has to be will be, for me as well as you.” And muttering and mowing, the old woman and her cat plunged into the woods and were gone before the men returned, bearing the gate between them.

CHAPTER XLV.

A DAY OF TERROR.

THE strange yellow light and sultry murk of the air, so oppressive in its earlier hours, steadily increased as the day drew toward night. As the men, bearing their awful load, emerged from the woods into the open country, and with the instinct of coast people turned their eyes toward the ocean to gather its augury for the next few hours, they saw with a certain terror that it was closed from their view, not by fog or cloud, but by a sultry glare of amber light like nothing they had ever seen before, while darkness to be felt rather than seen gathered around them more deeply at every step.

"Why, what's the matter?" cried Henschman, turning back, as the men stumbled and almost fell. "Can't you walk straight?"

"What's the matter with the sun, Mr. Henschman?" retorted one of the men. "He looks as if that old witch had cursed him, too."

"Shut up your head, you fool!" growled the agent in angry panic. "Are you such a coward as to be frightened by an old woman's scolding tongue?"

"I'm frightened of God Almighty and Judgment Day, and the man's a fool who is n't," replied the man staunchly. "And in forty year, I never saw a sight like yon." And resting his load upon his knee, he pointed to the strange yellow veil across the sea, and the sun

just visible through the murky western clouds, hanging like a ball of tarnished copper above an earth he refused to illuminate.

“And hark you to the noise out yonder,” said the other man nodding toward the sea. “Hear them v’ices kind o’ softly singing to theirselves? That’s mermaids, and they means mischief.”

“Fool! It’s the surf on the back o’ the beach, and Manomet,” snarled Henchman. “Come on, while there’s light to see the road before you.”

“Don’t be quite so handy with your ‘fools,’ Henchman! Tell us, if you know so much, what’s going to hinder our seeing the road afore us at three o’clock of an afternoon in October?”

And the two men looked at each other, yet quickly looked away, for the lurid light made each man’s face terrible to his neighbor.

Henchman opened his mouth to reply, but the wind, coming up out of the southwest in those heavy and weary sighs that suggest an overborne earth yearning for her rest, blew aside the handkerchief covering the dead man’s face, and showed it so grewsome in that grewsome light that, gasping instead of speaking, the agent turned and hastened down the steep hill toward the town, the bearers and their load following as fast as they could, pausing not until they reached the dead man’s home, and laid down their load upon the table, where he had eaten a hasty meal before setting forth upon an errand so fatal in its sequel.

A slender figure cowered timidly in the corner as they entered, and would have flitted past unseen, but as the light of a candle already lighted on the mantelshelf fell upon that fearful face, a cry, terrible because it was so

suppressed, burst from the girl's white lips, and she fell heavily into the arms of Abiah, who was just rushing in at the door.

"Oh, Hannah! Hannah! What is it? What has happened? Oh!" —

And the wife, still mechanically grasping the unconscious form of the girl, glared wildly past her fallen head at the sight upon the table, which Henchman was covering from her sight.

Neighbors and friends came thronging in, and the kindly sympathy that made Old Colony folk of that day like one family was tendered fully and freely; but still all minds were more or less oppressed with a panic and a foreboding that this awful calamity seemed rather to intensify than cover. Darkness had now fully fallen, — a darkness so intense that it seemed ponderous and palpable rather than the mere absence of light, — a darkness through which struggled no light of moon or stars, but into whose intensity was woven strange gleams of phosphorescence from the sea, whose waters broke in lines of glowing fire upon the beach, while out of its gleaming distances came ever and anon that strange murmur, those moans and sighs and vague melodies, that the old sailor had recognized as the songs of sirens. As the actual night drew in, the darkness deepened in more than the usual ratio of night to day, so that the obscurity which, in the hours of daylight, had been fearful because it was like night, became, so soon as it was night, yet more fearful because it was like nothing ever experienced before by those who endured it.

The Day of Judgment has come! was the cry of those who believed, and non-believers no longer scoffed at such possibilities, but gazed upon each other with bewildered

and anguished doubt. Parson Robbins, whose wide reading and correspondence told him that such phenomena had occurred before, and were attributed to natural causes, whether those might be astral, or volcanic, or atmospheric, or merely the effect of vast forest fires, went busily from house to house, imparting this information to his people, and summoning them to courageous patience. Finally, however, perceiving that he produced about as much effect as the traveler who explains the philosophy of an eclipse to a tribe of Central Africans, he desisted, and when one man interrupted him with, "No use kicking against the pricks, Parson, nor in denyin' the power of an angry God to destroy a wicked world," he suddenly changed his base, and exclaimed, "You are right, Brother Foster, and since the Day of Doom is at hand, it behooves us sinners to hasten our repentance, and bring forth works meet for acceptance. Have you ever paid Widow Doten for that cow?"

"It died on my hands, Parson!" expostulated the deacon in a whine of mingled wrath and terror.

"You had owned it a week, and if you are about to be called into judgment" —

"I'll pay her, Parson, I'll pay her! Here, I'll get out the money now. There, there's twenty good silver dollars, and if you'll come along with me I'll give it to her this minute. It won't make any difference to either of us by this time to-morrow."

"Yes, it will make a great difference to your soul, brother."

"Oh, yes, yes. Well, come along, and yet — don't it look a little mite clearer than it did?"

"It is a little lighter for you," replied the parson,

significantly ; and the Widow Doten received her money, but left it lying all night upon the floor, where she had dropped it as idle dross. In the morning, however, she picked it up, for at sunrise the atmosphere lightened a little, a natural redness illuminated the east. The fowls, cattle, domestic creatures, birds, and men, each class led by the successive slowness of its intuitions to the same certainty, agreed that the peril was over, and resumed their usual occupations. The widow bestowed her dollars in the old teapot on the top shelf of the china-closet, and the deacon meditated how he should regain possession of them either as a loan, an investment, or by the sale of some unseasoned swamp-wood, which might, by a little "deaconing," be made to pass for sound oak.

Reuben Butler, up toward Carver, too busy, too tired, and too easy in his conscience to have been much frightened at the dark evening and night, was glad to find a promise of usual weather in the morning, for he had promised Mr. Cotton, out on the Kingston road, a load of hay, and was anxious to carry it, especially as he had loaded it the day before, and wanted the cart for his own stuyver-corn.

So, in the gleam of that promised sunrise, the good fellow, having breakfasted and wiped his mouth upon his shirt-sleeve, drove out of the yard as quickly as Bright and White Star would consent to travel, but paused at the cry of a little fellow who came running down the road after him.

"Hullo, Daddy's man! What do you want?" demanded he, with a delighted guffaw, for this was the only child, and a very bright one.

"Me want yide — yide on hay," replied Daddy's

man, lifting chubby arms and smiling face to the father, who never had found out how to say no.

“Want to yide on hay?” replied he now. “All right, then. Up you go!”

And with a strong toss he threw the child to the top of the load, where he sprawled, shouting in glee, and kicking his chubby heels in the air.

“Does ma’am know Daddy’s man came with daddy?” asked Butler, starting on the oxen.

“Ma’am dorn uppee ’tairs,” replied the boy, more gleefully than ever.

“Oh! Well, may be she ’ll get sca’at. I guess you ’ll have to run back, Daddy’s man, ’cause poor ma’am will be sca’at.”

But Daddy’s man knew his power, and calmly replying, “Me no go back,” burrowed deeper into the hay, while his father looked anxiously about him. The lurid yellow darkness of the day before was returning, in strange clouds driven up from the southwest before a fitful wind; the faint promise of the east was blotted out, and the sea completely hidden, except as the voices of the mermaids told where it lay; a heavy electric and sulphurous element crept into the air, and made it difficult to breathe.

Butler stopped his oxen, and getting out an old sail slung under the hay-rigging, shook it out, and throwing it up over the hay, spoke more positively than he ever had done before to the petted child.

“Daddy’s man, you’ve got to get down and run home, anyway. It’s getting awful dark, and there must be a tempest coming. I’ll cover up the hay and drive along, if I don’t get no farther than the village before it bursts, but you jump down, — here, slip

right down into daddy's arms, and run home to ma'am as fast as ever you can. It's going to thunder and lighten, and rain awful hard in a few minutes."

Daddy's man, not a littled subdued and puzzled by the strange look of the familiar objects around him, and by his father's unwonted decision, obeyed without demur, and slipping off the load with the charming trustfulness of childhood, was received in the paternal arms, vigorously kissed and set upon his feet, with the injunction to run home just as fast as he could, to the pleasant old red farmhouse, still in sight at the top of the hill. Seeing him set off, his little bare feet as they fell, spatting up the dust in clouds, the farmer turned his attention to covering his hay, the oxen trudging along the while, guided by an occasional gee! and haw! from their master, until, his task finished, he sat for a moment upon the load, and looked behind him; house and child had both disappeared in the gathering gloom, and the aspect of all things had grown more abnormal and terrifying. From some springs in a low-lying meadow, beside the road, masses of vapor were rising, so solid and grotesque of shape, that, had Reuben Butler ever heard of them, would surely have reminded him of the genii imprisoned by Solomon in copper spheres; but as he never had so much as heard of the Thousand and One Tales of the Arabian Nights, he was reminded of nothing, and only gazed in stolid astonishment, while the clouds rose, the first one to a great height, where it rapidly expanded into an umbrella-shape, and became a vivid red color; a second cloud following at a short interval, spread itself below the other, and was colored blue changing with green, another interval and then a third, densely white and substantial, arose and spread

itself like a foundation beneath the others, all three showing for a few moments in a stupendous pile of brilliant and airy architecture, as if the released and triumphant genii had built themselves a palace wherein to dwell.

But this magnificent sight endured only for a moment, and then the darkness swept in with appalling suddenness, and with it a lashing shower of rain, of such strange smell and feel that even the stolid young farmer became vaguely alarmed, and hurrying on to the cross-roads, turned his unwieldy team and set off toward home, wiping that slimy, ill-savored moisture from his face and goading on his oxen, who, lowing and distressed, seemed eager to break from the yoke and escape.

But at the gate of his farmyard Butler met his wife, who eagerly demanded : —

“Have you got the child, Reuben? Good land! What’s the matter with your face? It’s as black as a nigger’s!”

“The child! Has n’t he got home?” cried the father, mechanically wiping his face, blackened by that sooty and sulphurous rain.

And even while they spoke, the darkness of that fearful Dark Day shut down so suddenly and so entirely that although the woman, stumbling back to the house, lighted candles and set them in every window, to guide the child if he should be seeking his home, her husband, who had paused to unyoke and turn his cattle loose, and shut the barn-door against the level sheets of rain, could not distinguish their light, and only reached the house after long search by groping along the fence like a blind man.

And Daddy's man, whom we left spatting through the soft dust with little bare feet, half frightened, half delighted with the novel aspect of affairs? Just out of his father's sight he espied some ripe blackberries lingering in a sheltered nook, and turning aside to secure them, the little fellow spent a precious fifteen minutes at his feast, and before it was over was startled by the rain and the utter darkness. Scrambling back into the road he began to run, but alas! in the wrong direction, and striking into a loop-road, passed his father at a distance of not more than twenty rods, struck again into the main road just below that open space where Butler had turned his team, and hurried on toward the town, while his father was hastening home.

Just in the entrance of Plymouth village, the poor little one met a man, who, having children of his own, stopped him and asked his name.

"Daddy's man," was the reply.

"But where 's daddy?"

"Daddy let me yide on hay."

"Yes, but do you know where he is? Can you get to him by yourself?"

"Daddy's man go to daddy."

And breaking away from the dubious grasp of the other's hand, the child ran on, straight through Plymouth town, past all those safe chimney-nooks where little children sheltered from the terror of the Dark Day in their mother's arms; past the doors where the fathers of Plymouth anxiously considered the signs of the times, and meditated with the naive self-importance of Calvinism as to which of their personal or municipal sins had brought down this chastisement upon the earth.

Yes, and past that smitten home where S'uth'ard

Howland lay dead, with Abiah, his wife, weeping over him, and yet casting terrified glances at the windows black at noon with the darkness of midnight, and half listening to the whimpering of the children hiding at her feet and in her lap; the home where Hannah Howland, who only yesterday morning had heard the news of her dear brother Consider's shipwreck and death, and before night had met the bearers bringing in the body of her other brother, now lay white and still upon her bed in the little gable-bedroom, knowing nothing, caring nothing for the terrors of the Dark Day, because her own young days were forever darkened, and become "as a post that hasteth by," and as a bird whose light wings cleave the air and are gone.

Through the town and out upon the Kingston road, the poor child ran, and on and on, mile after mile through the darkness and the rain and the wild terror that convulsed the baby heart, and still through the powers of the tempest or the more terrible silences that fell between, the weak plaintive voice rose, broken with sobs and faint with terror and exhaustion:—

"Daddy's man wants daddy!" and "Daddy take Daddy's man home to mammy!"

On and on, more miles than one would dare to invent, for the story is a true one, that poor baby strayed, and by some strange chance came within hearing of no mortal ears, until toward night a voice from out the darkness called to him:—

"Come here! Come to me! Here!"

And the poor baby, too weary and too frightened to be shy, fell into that strange embrace, and in a moment to sleep, whispering as his eyelids closed:—

"Daddy's man wants mammy!"

With that second night the terror of darkness passed, and the next day a red and blear-eyed sun gazed drowsily upon the world from among copper-colored clouds; the birds and fowls awoke from their four-and-twenty hours of roosting; the cows, who had come lowing home to be milked before noon on the previous day, calmly betook themselves again to their meadows; men began to explain the late phenomena, to forget their late terrors, to doubt and deny nearly all that had passed, and to resume their old follies and wickedness. In short, human nature, subdued for a while before the mighty power of God's Nature, reasserted itself, and went on in its accustomed fashion.

With the earliest dawn, a haggard and well-nigh crazed couple, man and woman, came riding into Plymouth upon one horse, and straight to Parson Robbins' house. They were Reuben and Sally Butler, seeking for their child, and they knew the parson to be at once the wisest, the kindest, and the most influential man in the town; and they were justified, for, pausing only long enough to jot down his thermal observations of the Dark Day, and to lock up the sheets of paper he had laid out in the rain, and was now drying before the fire previous to examining them under the microscope, the parson, leaving his wife to persuade the heart-stricken pair to drink at least a good cup of coffee, if they could not eat, went out and raised a search-party, which, following the slight clue given by the child's departure when the too easy townsman had allowed him to run on after daddy's haycart, passed down the Kingston road, beat the woods, inquired at every house, and so worked on toward Plympton.

Bo's'n, the great mastiff who guarded the farmer's

homestead and was the child's favorite playfellow, was one of the party, and knew as well as any member of it for whom he was seeking; and he it was who, at the last, when, faint and weary, the men began to look at each other and speak of "having to give it up," he it was who, growling savagely at their speech, trotted off, put his nose to the ground, whimpered impatiently, flew into the bushes, out again into the road, circled round always with his nose to the ground, cried out a note of interrogation, glanced at his master as much as to say, "Follow me, and let these fools do as they like!" and finally, picking up the scent again, led the way up a grassy lane and bounded over a low wall, at sight of which the men turned superstitious and said: —

"'Tis Plympton churchyard! He means to say the child is dead!" And as if to point their terrors, a terrific screech arose upon the air, a yell of pain and rage from the dog, the noise of a scuffling combat, and the faint wailing of a baby voice.

"The child!" screamed Sally, and slid from behind her husband to the ground and was over the wall in a minute. The men followed, afraid, but yet ashamed to be outdone by a woman, and presently came upon Bo's'n in mortal combat with a fierce black creature which some of the party took for the devil and some for a catamount. The men, absorbed in a fight, saw nothing more, but the woman, to whom creation was but a detail in the search for her boy, flew past the struggling creatures and seized him where he lay, weak and white but alive, in the arms of a poor skeleton covered with skin and wrapped in an old red cloak.

"Daddy's man want mammy!" whispered the little fellow, and curling his arm around his mother's neck,

laid his head upon her shoulder and watched with the apathy of a sick child the rush of the men toward him and the last furious struggle of the beasts, resulting in the cat tearing herself away from the jaws of the dog and fleeing to the woods, where she may yet be alive for any testimony to the contrary.

"It's mother Crewe, and this is Bathsheby's grave," said a Plympton man at last when all had gathered about the poor effigy so mute and so harmless in their midst.

"Then that was Milker, her black cat, that she cursed folks with," faltered another, staring into the woods.

"And she stole my boy!" exclaimed the father in slow fierce wrath, but the quicker-witted woman interposed.

"No she did n't, she saved him. See these leaves in his hand, and his little tier is stained with berries. She found him and was good to him. Say, baby, did the old woman give you the berries and the sas'fras?"

"Ess, and divved me water."

"And she was good to you, wa'n't she, darling?"

"Ess. S'e singed, and Daddy's man wen' by-by."

"She fed him, and sung him to sleep in her arms. Men, bury her in her daughter's grave for the sake of your own mothers and of this dear child whose life she saved."

So spoke the woman, and was obeyed, so that in her death mother Crewe was more honored than in her life.

CHAPTER XLVI.

PHAIRO ! PHAIRO ! PHAIRO !

THE Dark Day was a memory of the past, the dark day of the Revolution was over, and many changes, historical, social, and personal, had passed over Plymouth, when one fine morning, Pompey, once the slave of General Goodwin, whose new uniform he had so discreetly admired, but now a freeman living near Eel River and supporting himself by capturing its denizens and selling them in town, trudged past his late master's house with his bag upon his back, and was hailed by the General's brother William, recently married to Lydia, daughter of Captain Simeon Samson, and a little over-glorious in his new dignities, or so the old man who had known him as a baby fancied.

"Hullo, Pomp ! What have you in your bag, you old villain ? Anything I can make use of at my house ?"

"Nuf'n, mas'r Billy, nuf'n but what you'll have plenty of to you house 'fore long, nuf'n but rheumatiz an' poberty."

William was still laughing at the retort when his brother appeared at the door, and politely saluting his former servant, inquired : —

"Any eels to-day, Pompey ?"

"Yes, mas' Gen'l, got some berry fine ones. Tek' 'em roun' to de kitch'n door, mas'r ?"

"Yes, a dozen of them. Here's a shilling, Pompey."

"'Scuse *me*, mas'r, but dat on'y pays fer half dozen. Dey 's two shillin' a dozen dis mawnin'."

"Two shillings, you rascal! Why you never pretended to charge more than one shilling a dozen before!" exclaimed the general, indignantly.

"I knows it, mas'r, I knows it berry well, but dey won' let me no more."

"*They* won't let you! Who won't let you, Pomp?" demanded Mr. Goodwin, who had never heard of a "trust."

"Well, I'll tell yo,' mas'r, on'y I don' wan' mas' Billy sniggering away, like I was n' a free nigger."

"Shut up, Bill. Well how was it, Pomp?"

"W'y, mas'r, it was jes' dis way. 'Bout sun-up dis mawnin I went down to de pots, an' sure 'nough dere was 'bout four dozen lubly fat eel, an' I says, 'Now, nigger, dere 's t'ree shillin' an' half safe in you' pouch, an' you 's a-gwine pay for dem new closes right straight off, on'y dey is six shillin', an' how de debbil is you gwine fer ter stretch t'ree shillin' into six shillin'? Well, I h'ist de bag onter my shoulder, an' I sot out down de road, alluz a-cunjurin' an' a-cunjurin' how t'ree shillin' was gwine ter stretch ober six shillin' worth o' breeches, w'en des as I come by dat woodsey spot down 'crost de brook, de pooties' leetly bird eber you see, he come flyin' along, same as if he'd come right out o' heben, an' he lit on a teenty-tonty lil' twig dat sent him teeterin' up an' down, up an' down, an' he sung it right out, dis-a-way, 'E-e-ly, e-e-ly, Pompey, e-e-ly! Sell oo eely one-a-shillin' two-a-shillin'!' "

And in the rich guttural notes of the negro voice the old fellow warbled out the song-sparrow's cadence in the words that certainly seemed to fit it as admirably

as if they had been composed for it, as indeed they had.

The Goodwins laughed, and the general, taking another coin from his pocket, tossed it to the old roman-cist saying : —

“Here, Pomp, here you are ! One shilling for a dozen eels, and one shilling for the best lie I’ve heard to-day.”

“W’y, I t’out you and mas’ Billy was a-talkin’ w’en I come along,” retorted Pompey, catching the coin in one black paw ; and then as if afraid he had gone too far, continued in a very plaintive voice : “’Pears like you wus alluz a-doin’ sumfin for dis pore chile, mas’ Ginerall. On’y last monf we had dat elegan’ fun’al fur poor ole ma’am Phyllis.”

“She was your own mother, you heathen,” interposed William, indignantly.

“I know she wuz, mas’ Billy, leas’ways ole mas’r said she wuz, an’ I’s boun’ to b’lieve him ; but den you see, mas’r, I ain’t ben free long ’nough ter take up all de w’ite folks’ notions, an’ w’en we was slaves it wa’n’t no great ’count ’bout mudders and faders, we wus ole niggers an’ lil’ niggers, an’ I ain’t got in de way o’ much else, not yit.”

“Well, you ’re free now, Pompey, and if you ’re not white it’s because the Lord made you black, and we can’t help it.”

“No, mas’ Gin’al, you can’ help it, an’ I can’ help it,” replied Pompey, slowly ; but suddenly brightening, he hoisted his bag of eels upon his shoulders, and touching his brimless hat, made toward the kitchen door, saying : “But dat wus mos’ an elegan’ fun’al, mas’ Gin’al, dat yo’ make for my ole mudder Phyllis. Ra’al coffin, wid shiny nails, an’ she a-layin’ out in de big front parlor, in

a layloc caliker, as smart as mustard. Cur'us dat w'en she was alive she would n' a ben ask' to set down in dat room, an' w'en she was dead she c'd lay dere, stretch out full len'th, an' all de w'ite folks takin' off dey hats to her! Kin' o' cur'us, but 't was a elegan' fun'al, t'ank you, mas'r."

He disappeared around the corner as he spoke, and the brothers looked at each other rather dubiously.

"Pompey's no man's fool," remarked the elder, at length, and they parted with a laugh.

As it chanced, that very afternoon, Priscilla Ham-matt, tying her summer hood over her comely head, and taking a covered basket in one hand and a bunch of white lilies in the other, set forth for a visit to her old friend Quasho, now living in a little cabin of his own, near New Guinea, a settlement of manumitted blacks a little west of the town. Willy, her oldest son and favorite companion, capered along at her side.

"What's in the basket, mamma?" asked he, peeping and sniffing.

"Some goodies for poor uncle Quash, who is sick."

"I smell ginger-cake."

"Yes, extra sweet and gingery. Too good for little boys."

And the mether turned a fond smile upon the little fellow, who grinned appreciatively as he replied, —

"Yes, bread and milk, and early to bed, and cold baths, that's what makes boys grow strong and hardy."

"I'm glad you've learned your lesson so well, sir, but you must n't mimic mamma."

"I did n't — no, I mean I won't again. And are the posies for uncle Quash, mamma?"

"No, dear, the posies are for dear aunt Nan."

And Willy, suddenly quiet, turned with his mother up through the alley between the old LeBaron house and that of James Hovey, brother of Parson Hovey and father of Abiah Howland. Mr. Hovey himself was now dead, and the estate was bought by Joshua Thomas, but the alley remained, as it does to this day, and then, as now, afforded a short and direct path to Burying Hill.

"Does aunt Nan know that you bring flowers to her, mamma?" asked the boy, as the two breasted the hill and stood for a moment to breathe, just where now lie the graves of William Goodwin and Lydia, his wife, and her heroic father, Captain Simeon Samson.

"No, darling, aunt Nan is not there; she is in heaven — and yet — love strong and faithful as ours cannot die; perhaps it makes a bridge that spirit feet can tread; perhaps you know it, darling."

Willy knew that his mother did not speak to him, and made no reply, except a wistful upward look, and the two passed on through the short brown grass, past the graves where Gideon White and Joanna Howland, his wife, lay at peace. He, happy in that he had at last entered into a kingdom which no revolution can ever convert into a republic, and she content that her bones lie in Burying Hill, and not like those of her sister Winslow, in an alien soil.

Close behind the mendacious monument to John Howland the Pilgrim, his great-grandson Consider had been laid to rest, and near his stone and that of his wife their daughter's grave had been made, as if even in death they would shelter and love her. A new stone, not mossed as now, but fresh from the graver's hand, had recently been set, and while Priscilla laid her lilies above the maiden's breast, Willy, who had not seen it,

threw himself upon his knees and spelt out the inscription : —

“ *Sic transit gloria mundi.* ”

TO THE MEMORY OF
MISS HANNAH HOWLAND,
WHO DIED OF A LANGUISHMENT,
JAN. 25, 1780.

For us they languish, and for us they die,
And shall they languish, shall they die in vain ! ”

“ What does the poetry mean, mamma ? And those words over the top — *Sic transit*, and the rest of it ? ”

“ That is Latin, my darling, and means that she was too beautiful and too sweet for this poor earth, so passed to heaven. That is what Parson Robbins told me. He made it, and so he did the poetry.”

“ And what does that mean ? ” persisted the boy.

“ I can hardly make you understand, Willy. Only you know that Christ died for you, don't you ? ”

“ In the Catechism ? ”

“ That tells about it, but as you grow up and have your own sorrows, my poor lamb, you will learn a great deal more about it than the Catechism can teach. But, because He died, and so, by his own innocent suffering, saved us all from hell, so good people — his elect, as they are called — can, by their own sufferings and prayers, join themselves to his Merits, and gain pardon in some degree for those they love. Aunt Nan was good — nobody could have been better, I believe, and she suffered much, and some of her kin died as if by a judgment, and that made her so sorry that she mourned herself to death, and the parson said she died like a lamb of sacrifice, so he wrote that. You don't understand much about it, do you, Willy ? ”

"Not much, mamma, but I loved aunt Nan dearly, and I love you, but " —

"But what, Willy?"

"I don't think I love God, if He wants people to kill themselves with crying about other people's being naughty. Does n't He love anybody?"

"Oh, child, child, hush this minute! Why, Willy, it's awful to talk that way, and the ground might open and swallow you up alive. I'm really frightened."

Willy regarded the ground under his feet, found that it still seemed pretty solid, looked up at the blue sky, full of summer sunshine, and at last fixed his serious eyes upon his mother's face, really pale with horror.

"Don't look so scared, mother. I don't believe God heard that time, and I won't talk about Him any more."

Truly, it must have been very difficult for staunch Calvinistic mothers to teach their boys about spiritual things without converting them either into rebels or cowards.

Silent and puzzled, Priscilla walked on past the graves of her grandfather the nameless nobleman, and Mary, his tardily faithful wife; past the grave of Elder Cushman, and the still plainly-defined site of the fort Myles Standish had commanded and loved so well; down the hill and Spring Lane, and up the Carver road until, coming to the house of William Fallowell, she turned south into the old Indian trail, and so came at last to a cluster of cabins occupied mostly by the manumitted slaves of Plymouth, nearly all of whom chose liberty with poverty and discomfort, to the mildest slavery that ever existed. Raising the latch of one of these doors, Mrs. Hammatt walked in at once, but stood for a moment dazed by the sudden transition from brilliant sunlight to smoky darkness.

"Dat you, Mis' Pris? And lil' mas'r Billy! You's welcome, chil'n, welcome as de flowers in May, dat you looks like, Mis' Prissy, my dear."

"Why, uncle Quash! Are you in bed? Are you sick? Here, let me open the door and get some light. What's the matter, uncle?"

"Oh, Mis' Pris, it's de grasshoppers — de grasshoppers dat's a burden. De pore ole man's a-goin', a-goin' fas'. Mas'r be right glad to see his ole nigger, dough I don' s'pose he want his queue tied; but dere'll be somefin, somefin fer ole Quash ter do fer mas'r. 'Pears like 't would n't be hebben if dere was n't."

"Mamma's made you some gingerbread, extra sweet and gingery, uncle Quash," said Willy gently, as he crept close up to the pillow of the old man, whom Priscilla was shocked to see looking so changed.

"Dat jes' like yo' mammy, mas'r Billy, an' shore 'nough you's gwine ter tek after her. Eber sence she wuz a lilly white pooty missy wi' yaller curls all down her back, she ben good to ole Quash and all de rest ob de folks like him: de sick, an' de ole, an' de helpless, an' dem dat hed no frien's, dem's de folks my Mis' Pris alluz was runnin' arter, w'ile de spruce young fellers was a-runnin' arter her."

"Here, uncle Quash, open your mouth and take this jelly. It's calves' foot and has some good old port in it. There, another spoonful! Now don't you feel a little stronger?"

"Shore 'nough I does, Mis' Pris! Dere's a kin' o' savin' grace in port wine jelly, but I nebber got much ob it 'cept w'en my young mist'esses got married. How's Miss Betsey, Mis' Prissy, my dear?"

"Very well, Quasho. Mr. Robbins was here the other day from Norfolk, and they have another baby."

“ Since lil’ mas’r Tommy Robbins? ”

“ Yes. This one is called Francis LeBaron, after my dear brother, you know.”

“ Yes, — won’er ef I’ll meet up wid mas’r Frank in de oder worl’, an’ ef he’ll ask fer de key o’ de apple-house? ”

“ You’re not going to the other world just yet, uncle Quash, don’t you think it! Why, what should I do, with all my dear old home broken up and gone! ”

And as the young woman laid her white and dimpled hand upon the old man’s forehead and bent lovingly over him he opened his eyes, those piteous umber-colored eyes that make a sick negro look so very sick, and whispered : —

“ Sen’ mas’r Billy out de door, Mis’ Pris.”

“ Run away, darling, and wait for mamma outside. Go and see Chloe’s children if you like, and give them these ground-nuts.”

The child, glad, perhaps, to get out of the dark and pain-infected atmosphere, went out, closing the door after him, and Priscilla, moistening her poor old servant’s lips with some lemonade she had been making, asked soothingly : —

“ What is it, Quash? What have you to tell me? ”

“ Mis’ Prissy, my dear, I’s got my warning. I’s got it shore.”

“ A warning, Quash? What sort of a warning? ”

“ Las’ night it was so hot an’ clost dat I could n’ sleep, nor yet I could n’ wake. Mas’r was roun’, and Phyllis, an’ ole mist’s your mammy, Mis’ Pris, an’ mas’r Frank, — oh, de ole shanty was chock full o’ white folks an’ sarvents ” —

“ You were feverish, uncle Quash, and dreamed, —

that was all!" interrupted Priscilla, soothingly. Quasho closed his eyes wearily, waited till she had done, and continued in exactly the same tone.

"An' dat Cal'line woman dat mas'r make me merry 'cause she 'd got a baby, she was here, — like her imperent, low-live manners comin' in 'long o' de w'ite folks — an' all to wonst dere by de window or des outside some one set up a-hollerin', 'Phair-o! Phair-o! Phair-o!' an' mas'r he turn 'roun' an' beckoned me wid he forefinger des the way he use ter, an' went out, and den it hollered ag'in 'Phairo! Phairo!' an' all de res' ob 'em dey nod an' beckon an' pass out, an' all de time dat voice nebber stop, nebber stop hollerin' 'Phairo!' An' it's a warnin', an' 'fore many days ole Quash 'll be buried in de Red Sea o' de'f, same as dat ole time Phairo was w'en de wheels o' dem carts got mired, and de drivers could n' lick dere hosses hard 'nough to mek 'em pull froo'."

"But Quash! Dear old uncle Quash! You know as well as I do that it is the crickets that make that noise! I heard them too, last night, and I often hear them."

"An' doos yo' fader come a-beckonin' all de time?" asked Quasho, sarcastically.

"No, but" —

"Den, Mis' Prissy, my dear, you don' know noffin' about it, an' you need n' try ter teach yo' ole unc' Quash how ter suck eggs, 'cause he know how long time 'fore you was born. Don' you git mad now, Mis' Prissy, will yo', honey?"

"No, indeed, uncle Quash. But you must let Mr. Isaac come up and see you, and give you some medicine, and I shall come again to-morrow or next day, and if you would be more comfortable you shall be moved to

my house, or to your own old room in Mr. Isaac's house as it is now" —

"Nebber was berry fon' o' Mis' Patty Howlan'," muttered Quash, discontentedly.

"Mrs. Isaac, you ought to call her," corrected Priscilla, gently; but the invalid had grown tired and perverse, only brightening a moment as his visitor bade him good-by to say: —

"Nebber min' ole nigger's cranky ways, Mis' Prissy, my dear, dey 'll soon be all buried up 'long o' him, an' dere's one 'quest I's got to make berry pertikler, 'fore dat time come."

"What is it, Quash?"

"I wants to be berried right 'crost mas'r's two feet, clost up so 's ef he felt kin' o' cold an' stretched 'em out in bed, he'd find ole nigger's heart to warm 'em on. We slep' dat way out in de woods one night, an' I make my min' den, dat 's de way we'd lay down fer good long comferbable sleep twell ole Gab'el's horn come to call us up fer jedgmen'.

"W'y, Mis' Prissy, my dear, I did n' go fer ter mek you cry — s'cuse me honey — dry up dem pooty eyes, or I'll hab to knock my ole head ag'in de floor at yo' lil' feet fer pardon."

"Oh, uncle Quash, uncle Quash, I shall be so lonesome — don't go — dear, faithful uncle Quash, don't go and leave me, don't!"

"Oh, Mis' Prissy, chile, dere's no 'halt' nor 'stan' at ease' in dis march. We's got to step along one right after t'oder, an' de dark woods swallows up one file an' den de nex', an' den de nex', an' still we's got to march w'en de cap'n says march, an' dere's no respec' o' persons neider: men an' women an' lil' chil'en, de w'ite

gen'lefolk an' de brack sarvents, de good an' de bad an' de indipperen', dey all keep step, an' dey all get swal-
 lered up in de brack woods; an' w'at lies t'oder side we
 has n' seen, nor de pos'riders don' bring no news. Par-
 son Robbins t'ink he know all 'bout it, but ole Quash
 don' purtend, no, nor don' keer, — mas'r someweers
 dere, an' Quash 'll fin' him out an' wait on him. Neb-
 ber no more de'f to come between. Good-by, Mis'
 Prissy, my dear, good-by but not fer long. Yo' lilly
 feet marchin' along, an' de picaninnies' an' all. Bimeby
 we 'll all git to-gedder ag'in, — an' dey nebber 'll sing
 Phairo! Phairo! Phairo! under our winders dere."

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE WOMAN SOLDIER.

“HERE, a sheer hulk, lies poor Tom Bowline,
The darling of our crew ;
No more he 'll hear the tempest rollin',
For death has broached him to.”

So sang or muttered Simeon Samson, pacing up and down the brow of Cole's Hill, just over the bones of those Pilgrims who in the first months had been laid to rest in wheat-sown graves.

“ Ah well, ah well — I wonder if Dawson is laid on the shelf — this fellow Nelson seems forging ahead of the rest — I'd like to meet him on the high seas on equal terms — well, well — if Deb wants a farm I suppose she'll have one, and I'll see if a man that's ploughed the seas for twenty years can plough the land as well, and if I can't — why, if there's no fighting to be done there's the merchant service.

‘ Here, a sheer hulk ’ ” —

The song broke off abruptly, for a horse cantering down Middle Street halted close at his side, and a blithe voice demanded : —

“ Is n't this Captain Samson ? ”

“ At your service, madam.”

“ Then I'm your cousin Deborah Samson, or, if you will, I'm Private Robert Shurtliffe, late of the Continental Army, and now discharged with a certificate of good conduct.”

"You are welcome, cousin. I have heard of you from my wife, and though you did n't make out to sail in my ship, we are in the same boat now, for my occupation's gone as well as yours. Peace is a good thing for peaceable folks, but a poor thing for fighters like you and me."

"I'm thinking of being married, for my part," said Deborah, bluntly.

"Aye? Well, then, for God's sake lay your fighting gear aside. Come, let me take you off your horse — h'm, I forgot your training, but the petticoats must hamper you a good deal in such manœuvres, don't they?"

Deborah, who had flung herself off her horse in a very masculine fashion, laughed, yet glancing shrewdly at her cousin's face, frowned a little.

"You don't want women stealing your trade, do you, cousin? Well, I had no man to fight for me, as your wife has, and when I heard those guns on Bunker Hill, I could n't stay idle, and there are two or three fewer enemies of American Independence in the world than there would have been if I had n't gone."

The captain turned his keen blue eyes upon the face of the speaker, but said nothing, and she, laughing loudly, continued: —

"You're glad I'm not your wife, and so am I, cousin. Two of a trade seldom agree, especially two master-workmen like you and me, so I'll forgive you your thought."

"Well, well! we won't fight each other. Come into the house and see my wife, while I put up your horse and bring in the saddle-bags. You'll stay with us for a while, I hope."

"Over one day. I was determined in my own mind

to have a good look at you and a good talk, before I married and settled down. It was knowing about you that led me to offer myself to our country."

That evening a circle of friends and neighbors collected round the fire in the great kitchen of the house on Middle Street, all intent to see and hear something of the woman soldier, whose fame had gone abroad throughout the army; the fame of dauntless courage, great zeal, quick comprehension, and ready obedience to orders, and a discretion so great and so consistent that her sex had never been suspected, until, overcome by illness and exhaustion, she fell senseless, and the surgeon placed his hand upon her heart to determine whether she were alive.

Many of our friends were in that circle, and as in most assemblies in old-time Plymouth, all were either kith or kin to the rest. Lydia, the daughter of the house, was there with William Goodwin, her husband; and his mother, born Lydia LeBaron, and his brother, Francis LeBaron Goodwin, with his new-made wife, Jenny Robbins; then there was Lydia's sister Priscilla, with Abraham Hammatt, her husband, and Margot, their orphaned sister; Henry Goodwin, late captain's clerk on board the Independence, was near his captain, as he always was when he might be; and Isaac LeBaron, with Martha Howland and one of S'uth'ard's daughters, was there; and Parson Robbins had strolled along with his daughter Jenny, and sat in the doorway, half protesting by his attitude and manner against the encouragement of female soldiery, but still, as a student of men and manners, he could not but listen while the heroine in her clear brisk voice, went on: —

"I was mustered into the service at Worcester, and

soon joined the army at West Point, and was rated in Captain Webb's company, Colonel Shepard's regiment, and General Patterson's brigade. Here I learned the manual, practiced the step, and got my uniform : a blue coat faced with white, white waistcoat and breeches ; half-boots and black stockings with leather garters under the knee ; a black stock made of velvet and very barbarously stiffened with leather ; a cap with a many-colored cockade on one side, and a white plume tipped with red on the other, and a white scarf tied around the crown.

"Then I had a French fusee and bayonet, a knapsack, cartridge-box, and thirty cartridges, and was ready for the fray. Six weeks later it came, and we had a skirmish at White Plains, where my left-hand comrade was shot dead, and I found the smell of battle first sickening, and then so intoxicating that I fought like a fury. After this we joined the French forces from Newport, under Count Rochambeau, and finally marched south, passing through Philadelphia, where the people climbed on each other's shoulders to cheer us as we passed, and feasted us on the best the city could afford. It was there that a young lady fell in love with Robert Shurtliffe, and sorely embarrassed him with her posies and her poetry and love-billets ; but this pleasant pastime soon gave way to fierce realities, when we came to the siege of Yorktown, and for seven days a continuous battle raged all along the line, and our poor fellows, cold, hungry, half clothed, and half equipped, fought against Cornwallis and eight thousand British regulars. That's the time George Washington, God bless him," — and as she spoke Deborah rose straight and rigid to her feet, and saluted, as if in presence of the Com-

mander in Chief, — “showed what was in him. He and Rochambeau and de Grasse saved the country” —

“Under God!” interpolated Doctor Robbins sternly.

“Yes, Parson, under God of course, but if they had n’t been the men they were, God’s battle would have been lost.”

“And what did you do, Deborah?” asked Captain Samson hurriedly, for the parson’s brow was ominous.

“Oh, I did as I was bid. The 7th of October, I was one of the party ordered to open a trench within a mile of the enemy’s batteries. It was cold, but the work warmed us, I assure you; my hands were soon blistered, and my back well-nigh broke, but I never shirked nor faltered, and after sunset, when we were relieved, I could scarce stand on my feet. General Lincoln, who commanded our detachment, chanced to spy me, and stopped to say: —

“‘This work’s too hard for you, my lad. Get to your tent and have a sleep until noon.’

“Three days later I was one of a party detailed to carry a redoubt which was enfilading our advanced forces. We were led on by the Marquis de Lafayette, and we fell upon the enemy like fire from heaven or the other place” —

A slight bustle near the door told that the parson had taken his departure, but the soldier went on, unconscious of her offense: —

“Oh, I tell you, friends, we have cause to love the French, and you LeBarons may be proud of your ancestry; Lafayette and the Baron de Viomenil were the heroes of that splendid assault, and we who followed did but move with the impulse of their fiery zeal — oh, it was glorious, it was glorious, that rush, — and when the re-

doubts were gained, and some of our men, crazed with the combat, would have slain unarmed prisoners, the Frenchmen interfered and beat them back, showing themselves masters of their own tempers and of their soldiers, even in the moment of bloody victory.

“ Well, we got back to Philadelphia, and Robert saw his sweetheart again, and broke a sixpence with her, and bade her a tender farewell till the war should be over and he could come back to marry her, and then we went into winter-quarters on the Hudson. The next June I was one of a party of volunteers to protect the patriot citizens of western Massachusetts from the British and Tories who molested them. We had a sharp skirmish, and I got two wounds, one in the head, to which I confessed, and one in the leg, which I concealed. Fortunately, the first was severe enough to send me into the hospital, where I contrived to secrete lint and ointment enough from the surgeon’s tray to dress the hidden wound, after myself extracting the ball; but it was sorry work, sorry work, and as I lay there exhausted and fevered I thought a good deal about my mother.

“ But I soon recovered, and was in more than a dozen sharp fights, — did a good deal of scouting, stayed within the enemy’s lines to nurse a comrade, and after he died had a narrow squeak of it to make my escape, — served General Patterson as aid-de-camp during the absence of Major Haskell, and lived in the general’s family on terms of intimacy.

“ After peace was proclaimed but not ratified, I got leave to go to Philadelphia to visit kind although mistaken friends, but before reaching them was struck down by a malignant fever and carried to a hospital. I was given up for dead, and lay unconscious for a long time,

but finally revived just in time to hear the soldier nurses quarreling over my clothes, which they were to divide. That provoked me so sorely that I moved my hand and said something, but what I know not, for I relapsed at once into unconsciousness, and when I awoke found myself in the apartments of Mrs. Parker, the matron of the hospital, who raised my head and held a cup to my lips, saying, —

“ ‘ Oh, you foolish girl, how came you here ! ’

“ Dr. Binney was very kind to me, and as soon as I could sit up, took me home to his own house, where his daughters gave me some clothes and marveled hugely at my adventures. Then I went back to General Patterson, who presented Deborah Samson with Robert Shurtliffe’s honorable discharge, and here I am. Cousin Samson, my throat is wondrous dry. Have you a mug of cider at hand, and may I step out for a breath or two of fresh air ? It is a long while since I have lived in houses.”

“ Lyddy, come and help me bring out some cider and something stronger, for our friends,” said Mistress Samson, rising and nodding to her daughter Goodwin. “ It seems to me, we all need a little something to revive our courage after our cousin’s story.”

“ I wonder what sort of man has ventured to ask her to marry him ? ” suggested William Goodwin, who liked to be master in his own house, and as the company filled their glasses, a significant smile went round.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY.

"AND you 'll really go and leave us all, little sister?"

"Yes, Priscilla, dearly as I love you, I must love my husband better; but oh, Pris, I *do* love you!" And Margot's arms went round her sister's neck, and her bright flower-face hid itself upon the other's matronly kerchief.

"And I love my little Margot — our father's pet and darling."

"Oh, Pris, you 'll tend his grave — you like to go up there; but I don't dare. It seems — oh, I can't tell how it seems; but I can't go up on the hill even to bid father's grave good-by, and that little Margaret that died, and lies next to mother, — it always seems as if it might have been me. I can't bear to see Margaret LeBaron on a gravestone."

"Yet Margaret Montarnaud must some day have a grave," suggested Priscilla, reprovingly.

"Oh, don't! How can you, Pris, just the last day I'm with you!"

And the little thing began to sob and cling like a limpet to her sister's neck.

"My pet, do you remember what our sister Betty said to you when she was here at father's funeral?"

"No — that is — I don't know" —

"She tried to make you see that now you are woman grown, and have married" —

“Not yet a day married!”

“Still you *are* married, Madame de Montarnaud, and, as Betty said, it hardly becomes a woman old enough to be a wife to cherish the follies of a child. You must learn to face the hard things, and the rough things, and the painful things of life, Margaret, for they will come to you, as they come to all of us — every one. Oh, sweet little sister, darling pet, my precious Margot, you know how I, how all of us, would shield you if we could; but we cannot, child, we cannot, — the dark things of life will come to you” —

“Philip, Philip!” cried the young wife, breaking from her sister’s arms and rushing into those of her husband, who, coming in at the open door, paused in amazement at the Niobe group before him, for Priscilla was crying softly, even as she exhorted to courage.

“Oh, Phil, Pris is saying I’ve got to be unhappy and wretched, and see things I don’t want to, and cry — I don’t want to, Phil — I don’t want to. And I can’t go up on the Hill again — I’m afraid to.”

“There, there, Mignonne! there, there! Hide thy curly head here, and close thine eyes tight, so as to see no — what is it now? — no boo-a-boo.”

And at his queer pronunciation of the word, Margot lifted her head and laughed until the tears yet upon her cheeks found wells in the dimples, and one looked for a rainbow, so brightly did the sun shine through the shower.

“Oh, there’s Mercy Watson — I must speak to her once more,” cried she, before the laugh was done, and out at the door she sped, leaving her husband and sister face to face.

“You will be very patient with her, Philip! She is a petted child, rather than a responsible woman.”

"Fear nothing, dear good sister. I understand her perfectly — perfectly. She is not like you or Madame Robbins, or the others. She took none of her nature from the respectable Rock down there."

And the Frenchman bowed with a courteous wave of his hat.

"She is not at all of New England; oh, not at all; but she is French of the French. She loves beauty, and sunshine, and music, and flowers, and laughter; and the other things, they — ah! they pain her, they wound her, as the brush to scrub with would wound her so charming little rose-leaf hands. And yet, my sister, if the occasion came, — if she had a baby in her arms, and a savage approached, would she drop it and flee? Not at all, not at all! not so quickly as that brave Amazon whose story I hear from all of you. That one has her courage, no doubt, but Margot has a finer courage, — the courage of good blood, of good birth, of honor and of chivalry, of nobility, — the one is the mastiff, who flies at the throat of a house-breaker; the other is the humming-bird, that darts fearlessly in the face of man or woman if her nest is threatened. Ah, Madame Priscilla, I know my Margot better than you do, and I am well content; yes, and she shall be content, I do promise you on the faith of a gentleman, by my mother's grave, by my hopes of eternity."

"Well, Philip, if you are content, and if you will make her happy, I have no more to say. It is true enough that she is unlike the rest of us, and I think our father and she were perhaps nearer to each other than — than — some others; but she is very, very dear to me."

"And to me, sister," with which astonishing announcement Monsieur de Montarnaud took his sister-in-law by

the hand and lightly kissed her on each cheek, a ceremony witnessed by two persons coming in at opposite doors.

"Here, here! Who's kissing my wife?" exclaimed Abraham Hammatt, from one side, and, —

"Now, now! That's my husband, if you please, Mrs. Hammatt, and not yours!" cried Margot, and then, dancing up to her brother-in-law, she held up a soft round cheek, saying, "And perhaps, Aby, you'd better kiss me a little, just to make things square."

"With all the pleasure in life, my dear, and not the first time, either."

Four-and-twenty hours later a little group of friends stood on Cole's Hill, watching a ship called *La Reine Blanche*, bound toward Bordeaux from Plymouth, make her stately way out of the harbor. On the deck a slender girl clung to her husband's arm, and sobbed, and sobbed, and wiped her eyes, and held the handkerchief above her head, and cried incoherent good-bys, and wild words of farewell, that the wind bore away to the laughing and dimpling sea beyond the Gurnet, which seemed to say, "Oh, she will smile and laugh with me ere long," and on the shore a grave, sweet woman, comely and young, yet steadfast and restrained, stood, and waved her handkerchief, while the tears ran quietly down her cheeks and fell upon the dust that covered Katharine Carver's head.

"There, they've rounded Beach Point, and are standing out. Come, wife, 't is ill luck to watch them out of sight," said Abraham Hammatt, and Priscilla, the suppressed emotion of her heart suddenly surging over its bounds, pressed both hands to her heart and flung them seaward, crying: —

“Oh, God bless you! God in heaven bless you, my little sister!”

And that night there were fresh flowers on the grave of Lazarus LeBaron, laid there with the whispered words:—

“Margot says good-by, dear!”

APPENDIX.

CAPTAIN SAMSON'S PETITION TO THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS.¹

HALLIFAX HARBOR ON BOARD THE GARD SHIP.

January, 20th, 1777.

GENTLEMEN, — I take this Oppertunity to Inform you with my misforten of being taken which happen^d on the 25 of November Last, being then 6 or 7 Leagues Distance to the Southward of Cape Sables att 4 o'Clock P. M., fell in with the Sloop of War Called the Hope of 16 Guns upwards of 100 Men, Command by George Dawson, and the Nancy Transport with 16 Guns & 60 men, they being Bound from this Port to fort Cumberland in the Bay of fonday. I soon came to Action with the Hope, the Nancy lying att the Distance of half a mile. But the Officer on Board the Nancy Seeing me attack the Hope Closely for more than one Hour Came up and ingage^d me on the Larboard Quarter at the Same time the Hope on my Starboard Beam. The Action continue^d aBout 3 Glasses, But finding my Self over Mach^d By the two, my Riggⁿin & Sales in a Shattard Condision & in a miserable Situation I thought most Prudent to Sheare of which I Did But the Enemy out Sale^s me came up & after making a running Fight for Sometime was under the Disagreeable Nicsaty of Submitting.

I had some men kill^d in the Engagement, and 7 wounded, 2 of whom nave Since Dye^d with There Wounds, the Lose of the Enemy is at presant unsartain. the 6 Instant the Ship that I was a Board of in the Bay of funday arriv^d at this Port & the 8th I was put on Board this Ship with the most of my Crew, whare I met with a number of my Brother

¹ Page 336.

Countrymen that have unhapaly fell in to the hands of our Cruel Enemies.

We are all in Number on Board 100 and in General in a Deplorable Situation, having Been robbed off most of our Clothing By the Different Ships we ware taken by. one of my men was Froze to Death the 13th inst & there is about 40 more froze Some Badly 4 Sent to the Hospittle wone of which So Badly froze tis thought he will Loos Both his Leggs, the Ship we are a Board of is ould open & Leaky, it is the Enclemency of the Season, are short of Provisions and Nes-saray^s of Life Shant think Strange if many of us Should not Survive until the Opning of the Spring Except Some meathod Can be taken to Exchange prisners this matter I Beg your Honours will take into Consideration and that a Negotiation may take place as soon as possible. this matter I refer to a pertition we have all Ready Sent you from this Ship.

Gentlemen I am with Grate Asteem your Most Obed^t
Humble Servant att Command SIM^m SAMSON

N. B. The Brig^e Independence is not arrived in this port as yet — & I flatter myself she has Return^d to the State She Belon^s to

To this letter is appended the following hint as to the action of Congress upon our hero's simple and manly appeal.

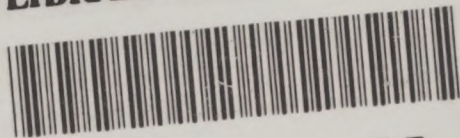
In the house of Representatives Feb. 7, 1777.

Read and thereupon Ordered that the Council be desired to take the Same into Consideration & Endeavour to procure the Officers & Seamen prisoners in the State of New Hampshire & Collect those in this State and send them in a Flagg to Hallifax for the purpose of redeeming Capt. Samson his Officers & Company & as many others now prisoners there as can be. Sent up for Concurrence

J. WARREN SPKR.

And J. Warren, Speaker, was James Warren of Plymouth, late partner in the firm of Goodwin & Warren, Captain Samson's first owners.

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